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ABSTRACT

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education funded 21 state and 164 college and middle school partnership grants for Project GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), which encourages disadvantaged youth to prepare for college. As part of its grant, Fairmont State College (West Virginia) surveyed parents and incoming seventh-grade students at 29 primarily rural middle schools to gather baseline information about their perceptions of and aspirations for postsecondary education. Results indicate that students had a generally positive view of their academic abilities and efforts, while parents had a slightly higher perception of their children's efforts. Parent involvement in school-based activities was limited in scope, with more mothers than fathers reporting involvement. Students felt responsible for their own learning, but they did not feel that their learning was interesting or exciting, that they were given the opportunity for exploration or investigation, or that teachers valued their thoughts or feelings. Student and parent aspirations were high with regard to postsecondary education. Students viewed parents and teachers as their best sources of information regarding academic choices, but few parents were familiar with high school graduation and college entrance requirements. Students did not have a real understanding of what was required of them now to begin preparing academically for college. Parents and students perceived financial difficulties to be the biggest deterrent to postsecondary education, and only half believed they would be able to afford college. Recommendations are offered for increasing students' and parents' awareness of and interest in postsecondary education. Appendices present student and parent survey questionnaires. (Contains 17 references, 11 figures, and 3 tables.) (TD)

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Fairmont State College GEAR UP Project:

Year 2 Baseline Survey (2000-2001)

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

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Fairmont State College
GEAR UP Project:

Year 2 Baseline Survey (2000-2001)

March 2001

Kimberly S. Cowley

AEL, Inc.
P. O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325

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Post Office Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325-1348
304-347-0400
800-624-9120
304-347-0487 (fax)
aelinfo@ael.org
http://www.ael.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education funded 21 state and 164 college and middle school partnership grants for Project GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). These grants focused on encouraging disadvantaged youth to have high expectations, stay in school, and take academically rigorous courses to prepare them for college. Fairmont State College (FSC) received the fourth largest grant nationwide and was the only West Virginia recipient.

FSC's partnership grant includes early intervention, partnership, and scholarship components for its mostly rural constituents in north central West Virginia. Collaborating agencies include nine county boards of education (Barbour, Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, and Tucker) and a number of state, business, and organizational partners. The grant initially funds academic and support services for seventh-grade students and their parents and follows those students through the following four years. In addition, a new pool of seventh graders is added each successive year. Typical activities include tutoring, mentoring and counseling, after-school and weekend activities, summer camps, financial planning and college awareness sessions for parents, educational classes for parents, curriculum guides, staff development and training, support equipment and motivational materials, and internships.

As part of its GEAR UP grant, FSC contracted with AEL, Inc., to administer and analyze surveys to gather baseline information on incoming seventh-grade students' and parents' awareness and perceptions of, interest in, and aspirations for students' postsecondary education. This report summarizes findings from the second administration of the surveys in September 2000 at 29 middle schools within the nine-county region. The main objectives are to analyze and summarize regional GEAR UP baseline survey data.

Three surveys were used for data collection—two different student surveys and one parent survey (one copy for mothers and one copy for fathers). One student survey and the parent survey were modified from drafts provided by the federal funding agency, while FSC and AEL developed the second student survey. These surveys were modified based on findings from the first-year administration. The AEL/FSC student survey contained 64 items, the federal student survey contained 27 items, and the federal parent survey contained 36 items, all with both selected-response and open-ended items. To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct (internal consistency), Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores: the AEL/FSC student survey coefficient was .90, the federal student survey coefficient was .68, the federal parent survey coefficient for mothers was .75, and the federal parent survey coefficient for fathers was .77.

In July 2000, AEL staff provided survey masters to FSC staff, who then photocopied the final surveys and assembled student packets (containing a cover page, an AEL/FSC student survey, a federal student survey, and two copies of the federal parent survey) to be distributed to school staff. Each participating school received an appropriate number of student packets, as well as envelopes for returning the completed surveys to AEL. The total number of seventh-grade students at the participating schools was 2,600.

Teachers were instructed to complete the demographic cover page, transfer the corresponding identification number to all four surveys, and then remove the cover page before distributing the packets to students. The cover pages were to be collected and sent to FSC staff. Students were given time during a class period to complete both of their surveys and were instructed to take the parent surveys home for their parents to complete and then return them to their teacher. After all surveys for a school were completed and returned, a staff member packaged the materials in the envelopes provided, and mailed them to AEL.

While no specific deadline was given for returning the completed surveys, school staff were urged to administer them as soon as feasible so that planning for GEAR UP activities could be finalized and project implementation could begin. Of the 29 participating schools, 24 returned their surveys in September, 4 in October, and 1 in November.

Response rates varied by type of survey. A total of 2,414 usable AEL/FSC student surveys were received (93% return rate), while 2,387 federal student surveys were received (92% return rate). Parental participation rates are estimates only, based on the assumption that each student has both a male and female parent or guardian: 2,159 mother surveys were received (83% return rate) and 1,667 father surveys were received (64% return rate). While student return rates were identical to those for last year, the response rates increased 8% for mothers and 4% for fathers.

In order to provide timely data to FSC staff for finalizing GEAR UP activities, data analyses and summarization were completed in February 2001. School-specific, county-specific, and regional summaries were prepared on survey facsimiles, with response percentages printed in red ink to aid readability. In late February, the following materials were transmitted to FSC staff: a complete set of the school, county, and regional summaries for FSC use; county-specific summaries for sharing with the nine county GEAR UP coordinators; and school-specific summaries for sharing with principals from the 29 participating schools.

Findings are presented for the regional overview by type of survey and include narrative text, 3 tables, and 11 figures. Some of the key conclusions and recommendations follow.

Conclusions

- Overall, students seem to have a positive view of their academic abilities and of the effort they put into their studies. Two thirds view themselves as good students and almost a fourth believe they are excellent students. Further, half believe they work as hard as other students and a third report that they work harder or much harder. Parents have a slightly higher perception of the effort their child puts into education. Almost three fourths perceive that their child works harder or much harder than other children and that their child is either an excellent or good student.
- Parent involvement in school-based activities seems to be limited in scope. About half of the mothers and a fourth of the fathers report that they occasionally or frequently meet with their child's teachers. About three fourths of the mothers and two thirds of the fathers report they occasionally or frequently attend activities at their child's school.

- Students report being well supported in the areas of confidence to take action, sense of accomplishment, and leadership and responsibility. They report feeling less well supported in fun and excitement, belonging, and curiosity and creativity. In other words, while students report fairly strong views of feeling responsible for their own learning, they do not seem to view their learning as particularly interesting or exciting, do not feel that they are given the opportunity for exploration or investigation, and do not feel that teachers particularly value their thoughts or feelings.
- Overall, student and parent aspirations are high in regard to the student's postsecondary education. Nearly half of the students believe they will obtain either a bachelor or graduate degree, three fourths believe their mother wants them to get a bachelor or graduate degree, and two thirds believe the same for their fathers. The majority of students report that their parents expect them to go to college and more than three fourths of the parents report wanting their child to obtain either a bachelor or graduate degree.
- Students view parents and teachers as their best sources of information regarding academic choices and most value their input to educational decision making. However, only about a third of the parents are familiar with college entrance requirements and less than a third believe they have enough information on high school graduation requirements.
- Students do not seem to have a real understanding of what is required of them now to begin preparing for college. Only half know which courses are needed to adequately prepare them and report that they plan to take such academically challenging courses as chemistry, algebra, or a foreign language. Only a third plan to take physics and less than a fourth plan to take calculus or trigonometry.
- There seems to be a wide range in the level of parent and student awareness regarding financial aid options for postsecondary education. While more than half of the parents report that they are aware of the various types of available financial aid, only a third believe their child will qualify for such aid. Further, only about half of the parents and students believe that the students probably or definitely will be able to afford college. Both parents and students perceive financial difficulties to be the biggest deterrent to postsecondary education.

Recommendations

- Establish tutoring and mentoring programs and encourage student participation.
- Emphasize the importance of taking more challenging college-preparatory courses to prepare students for postsecondary education.
- Provide students and parents with information about and entrance requirements for both two- and four-year colleges, as well as for vocational and business schools.
- Provide students and parents with information about and requirements for various financial aid sources for financing postsecondary education.
- Work to find ways to increase parents' involvement in the academic lives of their children, beyond occasionally meeting with teachers or attending school activities.

INTRODUCTION

GEAR UP Description

In August 1999, President Clinton announced $120 million in GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grants to 21 states and 164 partnerships of colleges and middle schools across the country (Office of the Press Secretary, 1999). These U.S. Department of Education-funded grants were to encourage disadvantaged youth to have high expectations, to stay in school, and to take academically rigorous courses to prepare them for college. GEAR UP differs from other federal programs in that it

- begins no later than the seventh grade to help ensure that students take appropriate college preparatory courses and follows them through high school
- transforms schools by working with entire grades of students (cohort or whole-grade approach) to provide a comprehensive array of services including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, strengthening the curriculum, professional development for teachers and staff, parent involvement, after-school programs, summer academic and enrichment programs, and college visits
- leverages local resources by encouraging colleges to partner with low-income middle schools and leverages nonfederal resources with a 1-for-1 match requirement
- provides college scholarships and 21st Century Scholar Certificates (early notification of students' eligibility for financial aid)
- bolsters state efforts by supporting early college preparation programs (Office of the Press Secretary, 1999)

Fairmont State College (FSC) received the fourth largest grant nationwide for 1999-2000 and was the only West Virginia recipient. Grant criteria included a demonstrated need for funding as reflected by poverty levels, gross income levels, college-going rates, and academic preparedness; critical components of early intervention efforts, activities to promote college preparation, and parent involvement; and a demonstrated commitment of partners (FSC, 1999).

Fairmont State College GEAR UP Grant

The FSC partnership grant aims to promote the academic advancement of higher education among youth by increasing their interest in and academic preparation for college. Specific purposes include giving more low-income students the skills, encouragement, and preparation needed to pursue a postsecondary education; contributing to the reform and improvement of schools; increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to go to college and succeed; strengthening academic programs and student services at participating schools; building an academic pipeline from high school to college; developing effective and enduring alliances among schools, colleges, students, parents, government, and community groups; improving teaching and learning; and raising standards of academic achievement for all students (FSC, 1999).

Fairmont's five-year grant includes early intervention, partnership, and scholarship components for its mostly rural constituents in north central West Virginia. Collaborating agencies include nine county boards of education (Barbour, Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, and Tucker) and a number of state, business, and organizational partners. Of the 48 schools within the nine-county region served by the grant, 29 (60%) have a *rural* Johnson code, a system used by the National Center for Education Statistics (2000) to assign locale types. Sixteen (33%) of the schools are classified as *small town* and 3 (6%) as *large town* (all in Monongalia County). Further, all 55 of West Virginia's counties have been classified as *Appalachia* by the Appalachian Regional Commission (2000).

The FSC GEAR UP grant initially funds academic and support services for seventh-grade students and their parents in the nine participating counties and follows those students through the following four years. In addition, a new pool of seventh graders is added each successive year. By the end of the five-year funding cycle, the majority of the high school population would have participated in GEAR UP directly or at least benefitted from the overflow effect of having a GEAR UP presence in each middle and high school. At that point, core elements of GEAR UP will have been institutionalized and systemic and environmental changes implemented in all 48 middle and high schools in the nine-county area. Typical activities include but are not limited to

- students (after-school tutoring, mentoring and counseling, after-school and weekend activities, and summer camps)
- parents (financial planning, college awareness, educational classes, and transportation assistance)
- staff (curriculum guides, staff development and training, support equipment and motivational materials, and internships) (FSC, 1999)

Purpose and Objectives of Study

As part of its scope of work in the GEAR UP grant, Fairmont State College contracted with AEL, Inc., to administer and analyze student and parent surveys to gather baseline information on incoming seventh-grade students' and parents' awareness and perceptions of, interest in, and aspirations for students' postsecondary education. This report summarizes findings from the second administration of the surveys in September 2000 at 29 middle and junior high schools within the nine-county region. (For results of the first baseline survey, see *Student and Parent Awareness of and Aspirations for Postsecondary Education: Fairmont State College GEAR UP Project, Year 1.*) The main objectives are to analyze and summarize regional GEAR UP baseline survey data. The primary audiences are FSC staff and GEAR UP funders. Secondary audiences include West Virginia GEAR UP partners, AEL staff, and others interested in student and parent aspirations.

Review of Literature

Student aspirations extend far beyond individual dreams or ambitions. Aspirations encompass individual and family educational goals, career choices, and self-concept. Quaglia and Perry (1993, p. 2) define aspirations as being composed of two components: inspiration and ambitions. "*Ambitions* represents an individual's ability to look ahead and invest in the future. *Inspiration* can be described as the individual's ability to invest the time, energy, and effort presently to reach their ambitions." (For a historical perspective on the aspirations construct, see Quaglia and Cobb's 1996 "Toward a Theory of Student Aspirations," *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 12*[3], 127-132.)

Researchers at the University of Maine's National Center for Student Aspirations have identified eight conditions that support high levels of aspirations in youth: achievement, belonging, curiosity, empowerment, excitement, mentoring, risk taking, and self-confidence (Plucker & Quaglia, 1998). The authors state that these conditions "provide an interpretive template that frames how students can be viewed and how schools can positively support . . . the development of student aspirations" (p. 253). Further research at the University's College of Education and Human Development resulted in modifications to the eight factors related to student aspirations. These eight conditions, which "emphasize the importance of putting the students at the center of any school initiative or program" (University of Maine, 1999a, p. 1), include

- **Belonging:** A relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community
- **Heroes:** People whom children admire and imitate because of their personal talents
- **Sense of Accomplishment:** In addition to academic success, recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as important signs of children's success
- **Fun and Excitement:** Involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind
- **Spirit of Adventure:** Characterized as a child's ability to take on positive, healthy challenges
- **Curiosity and Creativity:** Characterized as inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries
- **Leadership and Responsibility:** Children's sense of control and responsibility for their actions and words
- **Confidence to Take Action:** The extent to which children believe in themselves and is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-respect

Adolescence is characterized by emotional, physical, cognitive, and social transformations. As patterns of thoughts or choices emerge, youth begin to gain a picture of "who they are," which is essential for school to have meaning and purpose. Schools can help facilitate that transformation

by providing an environment conducive for students to learn how to usefully and productively manage their time, energy, and efforts in ways that are meaningful to them for the future and yet enjoyable to them in the present (Quaglia & Perry, 1993). Educators can try to influence aspirations with inspiration, realism, and respect (Sizer, 1996). Schools can achieve this, according to Sizer, by attracting "interesting" staff with aspirations of their own, keeping schools small to allow more than casual interactions, making time for students to pursue interests, providing "aspirer" models from the community, and being flexible. He notes, "Expect every youngster to have a worthy passion of some sort. Work at it, make it a priority, speak about it, make exceptions for it" (p. 126). Quaglia and Cobb (1996) state that youth are pressured toward uniformity by social groups and suggest that schools combat this mind-set by fostering an environment that encourages diversity, excellence, and risk taking among students.

Cobb, McIntire, and Pratt (as cited in Quaglia & Perry, 1993) report that rural youth believe that their parents are more supportive of them taking full-time jobs, attending vocational schools, or joining the service rather than going to college. In addition, Walberg and Greenberg (1996) note that rural youth also face economic decline, limited work opportunities, and increased isolation. Yet youth are a rural community's greatest asset. When youth migrate from their hometowns, rural communities suffer a loss of talent and vitality crucial to the development or maintenance of a desirable future for these communities (Ley, Nelson, & Beltyukova, 1996). Factors affecting out-migration include limited economic opportunities, lack of faith in a community to sustain favorable economic conditions, and a willingness of rural youth to look elsewhere. All of these, combined with overall lower aspirations for postsecondary education, make it more difficult for rural youth to achieve career and economic success within West Virginia.

Howley, Harmon, and Leopold (1996) note that educators and community leaders believe that rural youth are becoming less involved in their hometown communities—this disengagement may reinforce students' inclination to migrate elsewhere. The trick is to encourage and facilitate the development of rural students' aspirations and, at the same time, transform local communities into appealing places where young adults can prosper and grow while contributing to the quality of rural life.

According to Kampits (1996), rural youth have significantly higher graduation rates from high school than urban youth, yet they are less likely to pursue college degrees and are less likely to graduate from high school with firm plans for the future. In addition, low-income youth are less likely than more affluent youth to enroll in more demanding college-preparatory courses. She challenges educators to focus on the needs of the students:

> Regardless of high expectations—even regulations—that students will learn and demonstrate specific knowledge and understanding, first they must want to learn, be inspired to learn, and understand why they should learn. In short, they must be full partners, not just subjects, in the learning process. (Kampits, 1996, p. 176)

METHODS

Instrumentation

In July 2000, AEL staff revised the student and parent surveys based on data obtained from the first-year surveys. Such revisions included clarifying item stems and response options and adding more selected-response options from the most-frequently mentioned open-ended comments.

AEL/FSC student survey. This survey contained 64 items utilizing a variety of response options, mainly selected-response with only minimal open-ended items (for "other" descriptions). Students were asked demographic questions related to their families; questions about job aspirations and current classes; and yes/no questions about school participation, computer usage, and plans for taking specific courses in the future. Students were asked to rate their level of agreement (*Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*) for 10 items related to current perceptions and plans for life after high school. And, per a recommendation from the first-year report, 28 items from the University of Maine's *Students Speak* survey were added to capture data on the eight components related to aspirations (belonging, heroes, sense of accomplishment, fun and excitement, spirit of adventure, curiosity and creativity, leadership and responsibility, and confidence to take action) (University of Maine, 1999a). Students were asked to rate their level of agreement (*Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*) for these 28 items. For analysis purposes, the eight components formed eight separate subscales (see Table 1 for a listing of the items that comprise each subscale). Since each subscale had a different number of items, subscale means (total subscale score divided by number of items in the subscale) were used to enable cross-subscale comparisons.

Face validity of survey items was assumed by project staff, given their need for data on specific topics addressed in this survey, which was developed by FSC and AEL staff. To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct (internal consistency), Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores for the region (using interval and ordinal items, excluding demographic items). At .90, the coefficient was deemed to be very satisfactory for this type of instrument, which varied greatly from last year's coefficient of .39 (not unexpected, given the addition of 28 items for the eight aspirations subscales). At the subscale level, the coefficients ranged from .48 to .80 and were very similar to those obtained by the University of Maine researchers (1999b). See Table 1 for subscale reliability coefficients.

Federal student survey. This survey contained 27 items utilizing a variety of response options, mainly selected-response with only minimal open-ended items (for "other" descriptions). Students were asked to respond to items pertaining to school and school work, plans for the future, knowledge about college, their family, and background information. The last section (6 items) asked about their participation in GEAR UP; students were instructed to leave this section blank since no activities had been conducted to date for this group of seventh graders and their parents.

Table 1: Aspirations Subscale Items and Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Subscale and Coefficient	AEL Coeff.	UoM Coeff.	Items
Belonging	.80	.80	39. Teachers care about my problems and feelings. 40. Teachers respect my thoughts. 48. Teachers value my opinions. 50. I am proud of my school.
Heroes	.66	.66	38. I am a positive role model to other students. 42. I have a strong caring relationship with an adult. 45. Teachers expect me to succeed. 51. Teachers help me to succeed. 58. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.
Sense of Accomplishment	.70	.68	43. Teachers care about my success in class. 44. I believe I can always improve. 52. I put forth the necessary efforts to reach a goal. 55. Teachers tell me I do a good job when I try my best.
Fun and Excitement	.71	.70	37. I usually have fun in class. 57. Teachers make learning exciting. 60. I am not usually bored in school.
Spirit of Adventure	.54	.59	53. Teachers support me when I try something new. 56. I am eager to learn new things. 63. I have opportunities to decide for myself what I learn about in school.
Curiosity and Creativity	.64	.57	41. I seek solutions to complex problems. 54. My courses help me to understand what is happening in my everyday life. 59. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting. 64. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.
Leadership and Responsibility	.48	.44	49. I accept responsibility for my actions. 61. Teachers expect me to be a good decision-maker.
Confidence to Take Action	.61	.56	46. I am confident in my ability to do well. 47. I take action on causes I believe in. 62. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.

This survey was drafted by the federal funding agency and its use strongly recommended to GEAR UP grantees (AEL staff reformatted the survey and made slight modifications for consistency within survey responses). To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct, Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores for the region (using ordinal items, excluding demographic items), resulting in a coefficient of .68, the same as last year.

Federal parent survey. This survey contained 36 items utilizing a variety of response options, mainly selected-response with only minimal open-ended items (for "other" descriptions). Parents were asked to respond to items pertaining to their child, knowledge about college, and background information. The last section (8 items) asked about their participation in GEAR UP; parents were instructed to leave this section blank since no activities had been conducted to date for this group of seventh graders and their parents.

This survey was drafted by the federal funding agency and its use strongly recommended to GEAR UP grantees (AEL staff reformatted the survey and made slight modifications for consistency within survey responses). To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct, Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for both mother and father respondent scores for the region (using interval and ordinal items, excluding demographic items). For the mother scores, the coefficient was deemed satisfactory for this type of instrument at .75, comparable to last year's .76. The coefficient for the father scores was similar at .77, comparable to last year's .79.

Coding sheet. To keep respondents' identity anonymous in the analysis phase, students were assigned a unique code number. Coding was done at the school level, usually by the teachers. A Student Demographic Cover Page was completed for each student and included information about the student and parents. Identification codes included the student's Social Security, a two-digit county code, and a two-digit school code. By including these codes on all surveys, it is possible to compare an individual's responses across surveys throughout the five-year period, as well as link parent and student responses.

Data Collection

The three surveys described above were utilized to gather baseline data from seventh-grade students and their parents from the 29 middle and junior high schools in the nine-county area. The 2000-2001 seventh-grade population for these schools was 2,600. In July 2000, AEL staff provided survey masters to FSC staff, who then photocopied the final surveys and assembled student packets to be distributed to school staff. Each packet contained a one-page demographic cover page printed on goldenrod paper, a two-page (front/back) AEL/FSC student survey printed on green paper, a two-page (front/back) federal student survey printed on yellow paper, and two copies of the two-page (front/back) federal parent survey (one copy printed on pink paper for mothers and one copy printed on blue paper for fathers). Each participating school received an appropriate number of student packets, as well as envelopes for returning the completed surveys to AEL.

Teachers were instructed to complete the demographic cover page, transfer the corresponding identification number to all four surveys, and then remove the cover page before distributing the packets to students. The cover pages were to be collected and sent to FSC staff. Students were given time during a class period to complete both of their surveys and were instructed to take the parent surveys home for their parents to complete and then return them to their teacher. After all surveys for a school were completed and returned, a staff member packaged the materials in the envelopes provided and mailed them to AEL.

While no specific deadline was given for returning the completed surveys, school staff were urged to administer them as soon as feasible so that planning for GEAR UP activities could be finalized and project implementation could begin. Of the 29 participating schools, 24 returned their surveys in September, 4 in October, and 1 in November. See Appendix A for a completed SEDCAR Standards Checklist, which documents the data collection methods used in this project (Cooperative Education Data Collection and Reporting Standards Task Force, 1991).

Data Analyses

Databases were created using SPSS Windows for each of the surveys and temporary staff were hired and trained by AEL staff to enter the data. Data were entered by school into each of the four databases and stored both on disk and hard drive. As each set of data was entered, spot-checks were completed by staff to ensure accuracy. Further, preliminary analyses were run to aid staff in cleaning the data files. Once school analyses were completed, these files were merged into county-specific files so that these analyses could be conducted. Finally, the county files were merged into one master file to prepare a regional analysis by survey.

Response rates varied by survey. A total of 2,414 AEL/FSC student surveys were received (93% return rate), while 2,387 federal student surveys were received (92% return rate). As expected, parent participation was lower. A total of 2,159 surveys were received from students' mothers (83% return rate, if one assumes that all students have either a mother or some female guardian such as grandmother or stepmother, which is not ascertainable). A total of 1,667 surveys were received from students' fathers (64% return rate, making the same assumption about male caregivers). Therefore, response rates for parents should be viewed only as estimates of the population. While student return rates were identical to those for last year, the response rates increased 8% for mothers and 4% for fathers. See Table 2 for a breakdown of respondents by county and survey.

In order to provide timely data to FSC staff for finalizing GEAR UP activities, data analyses and summarization were completed in February 2001. School-specific, county-specific, and regional summaries were prepared on survey facsimiles, with response percentages printed in red ink to aid readability. In mid-February, the following materials were transmitted to FSC staff: a complete set of the school, county, and regional summaries for FSC use; county-specific summaries for sharing with the county coordinators; and school-specific summaries for sharing with the principals from the participating schools. See Appendix B for a copy of the regional summary by survey.

Table 2: Number of Respondents by County and Survey

County	AEL/FSC Student Survey	Federal Student Survey	Federal Parent Survey (Mothers)	Federal Parent Survey (Fathers)
Barbour	181	176	171	138
Doddridge	94	94	76	61
Harrison	588	584	542	377
Marion	360	362	325	235
Monongalia	217	223	200	152
Preston	358	354	311	256
Randolph	334	331	296	232
Taylor	192	173	158	139
Tucker	90	90	80	77
TOTAL	2,414	2,387	2,159	1,667

FINDINGS

This section presents findings from administering the surveys to seventh-grade students and their parents in the participating schools within the FSC GEAR UP area. Findings are presented by survey for the FSC region.

AEL/FSC Student Survey

A total of 2,414 students responded to this survey. However, due to missing data (skipped items), the number of respondents changes from item to item and is not reported.

Almost half of the student respondents reported having one brother (41%), followed by no brother (33%), and two brothers (17%). The remaining 9% reported having three or more brothers. Similarly, 40% of the students reported having one sister, 34% indicated having no sister, and 18% reported two sisters. The remaining 8% reported having three or more sisters. Thirty-nine percent of the students reported that four people lived in their home, followed by 25% with five members, and 18% with three. The minimum number reported was 2 (4%)*, the maximum was 12 (<1%).

Students were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. The most common responses were sports (14%) (either an athlete or a sports-related position), veterinarian (10%), doctor (7%), lawyer (5%), and teacher (5%); 13% were undecided and 11% indicated some other occupation not identified on the survey.

Students were asked how many hours they spent on homework each day for specific subjects (English, science, math, history/social studies, and other subjects combined). For each subject, about two thirds of the students reported spending approximately one hour per day per subject, with about a fourth reporting no homework. For all subjects, less than 15% reported spending two or more hours per day, and less than 2% reported not taking these specific subjects.

Eighty-two percent thought that their parents wanted them to go to college, 15% were not sure, and only 2% responded negatively. Seventy-five percent of the students indicated that they wanted to attend college, 18% were not sure, and 7% did not want to attend. Of those who did not want to attend college, 34% said that college was not important, 24% said that they did not have the money, 15% said that their grades were not good enough, and the remaining 25% provided some other explanation (such as not needing college for their chosen occupation or just not interested in

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*Ten respondents (<1%) indicated that none or only one person lived in their home; it is not clear as to whether these students were trying to indicate they lived with someone else (not in their own home) or if they simply responded incorrectly to the prompt.

college). Consistent with the current trend of outward migration of rural youth, only about half of the students indicated that they planned to be living in (52%) or working in (49%) West Virginia by the time they were 30.

When asked how they were doing in particular subjects, students' responses were fairly similar across subjects: 77% indicated that they were doing well in math, 82% in English, 82% in science, and 79% in history. For those who indicated that they were not doing well in these subjects, their most frequent explanations were identical for each subject, and had very similar percentages: have a grade of C or D (53%, 49%, 52%, 48%, respectively); don't do well on tests (45%, 31%, 36%, 38%, respectively); and don't understand the subject (30%, 24%, 21%, 20%, respectively).

Interestingly, while 76% thought that they had good study skills and the majority indicated that they were doing well in the four subjects mentioned above, almost half (44%) indicated a need for help with some classes. The most frequently mentioned subject was math (62%), followed by English (29%), social studies (27%), science (26%), and history (23%); only 7% mentioned some other subject such as reading or spelling (see Figure 1). Only 37% expressed an interest in attending an after-school tutoring or helping program, yet 62% were interested in a mentor/buddy. Further, students' impressions of their ability to go to college were quite high, with 90% responding affirmatively.

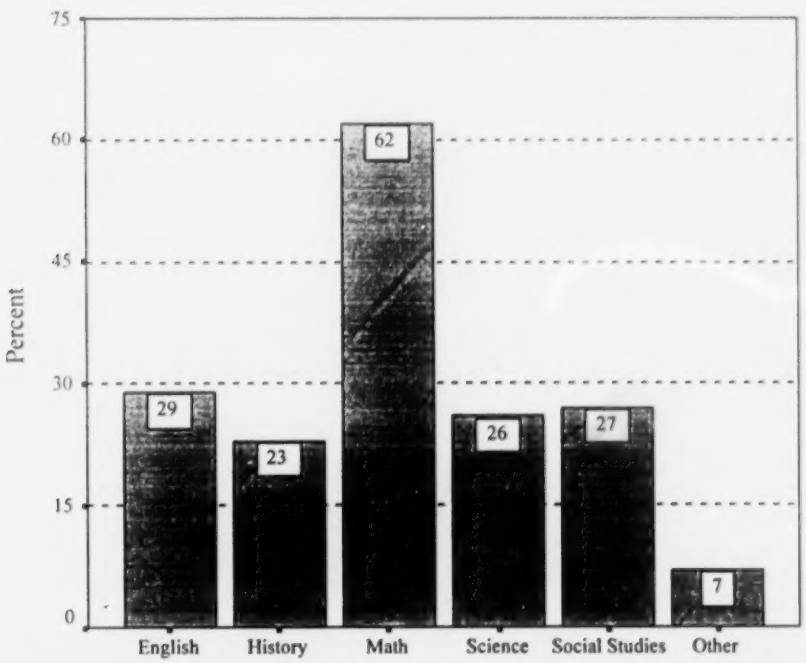

Figure 1: Students' Perceptions of Classes in Which They Need Help

Participation in school activities varied widely, with 62% indicating participation in sports, 40% in clubs, and 17% in student government. Students identified their most favorite class as gym/physical education (33%), math (22%), science (18%), English (8%), or history (7%); only 11% suggested additional subjects such as reading, band, art, or spelling (see Figure 2). When asked to explain their responses, students indicated that these classes were fun or cool (55%), that they liked the subject (40%) or the teacher (37%), that the subject was easy to understand (36%), that they liked the hands-on activities (22%), or felt the class was challenging (20%).

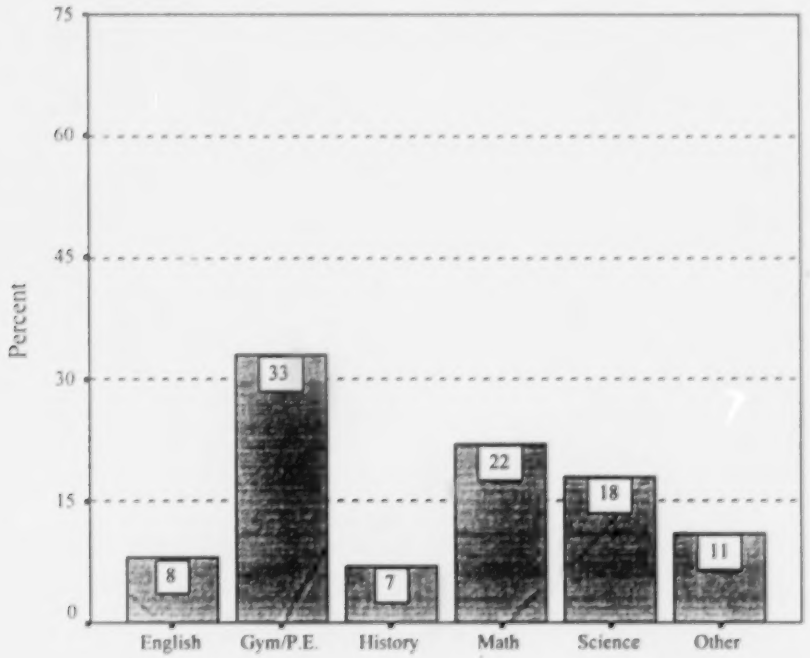

Figure 2: Favorite Classes as Identified by Students

Sixty-five percent of the students reported having used a computer for either homework or school projects, and 66% have already taken a computer class at school. Further, 71% reported having a computer at home, with 79% of these students having Internet access. Seventy-one percent reported that their parents used a computer as well.

Students were asked if they planned on taking several advanced-level courses either before or during high school. Positive responses included 63% for a foreign language, 57% for chemistry, 55% for algebra, 37% for physics, and 23% each for calculus and trigonometry (see Figure 3).

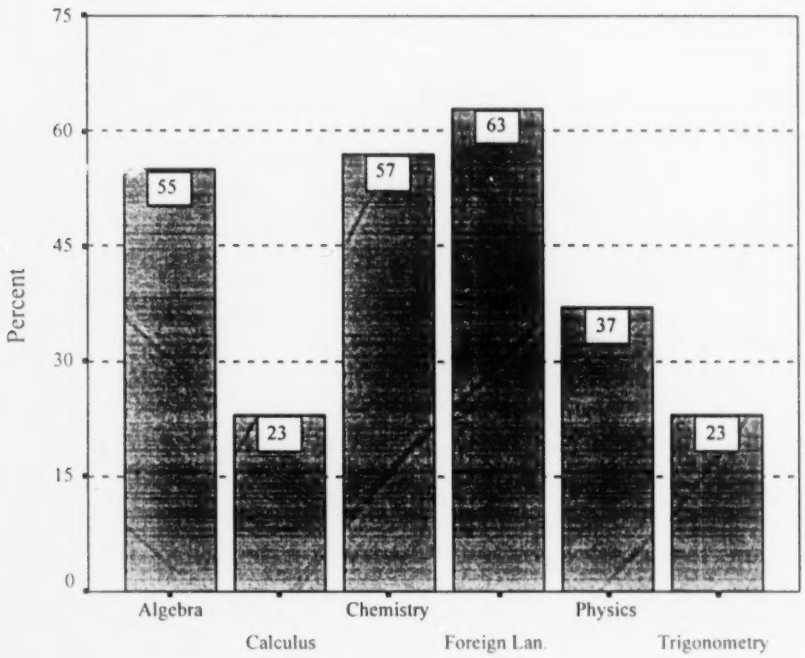

Figure 3: Advanced Courses That Students Plan to Take

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement with 10 items related to plans after high school. Item 28 (I want to make some money immediately after high school) received the highest level of agreement (78%). This was followed by Item 31 (74%), continuing education after high school might help students make career decisions; and Item 29 (67%), students plan to continue their education regardless of their career plans. While these levels of agreement might seem contrary, i.e., the emphasis on making money versus continuing education, students may have been referring to summer employment immediately after high school or simply may not have solved the money versus schooling dilemma.

Items 36 (opinions and plans of family help student make decisions), 27 (need more education to get a satisfying job), and 32 (anxious to begin working in chosen career) also received more than 50% agreement, with 64%, 60%, and 54%, respectively. The remaining four items had from 47% to 14% agreement, as follows: Item 34 (47%), getting a job might help students make decisions; Item 33 (32%), opinions and plans of friends help students make decisions; Item 30 (21%), students can get satisfying jobs without further education; and Item 35 (14%), students won't be able to afford to continue their education after high school.

Finally, the AEL/FSC student survey contained 28 items adapted from the National Center for Student Aspirations from the University of Maine's *Students Speak* survey. These items comprise eight subscales of Belonging, Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun and Excitement, Spirit of Adventure, Curiosity and Creativity, Leadership and Responsibility, and Confidence to Take Action. In order to give an overall sense of agreement, Figure 4 shows the level of agreement (agree or strongly agree) for each of the 28 items grouped by subscale. Students reported most agreement with the beliefs that they can always improve and that anyone can succeed if they work hard enough (91% each). They least agreed that they were positive role models to other students (41%) and that they were usually not bored in school (44%).

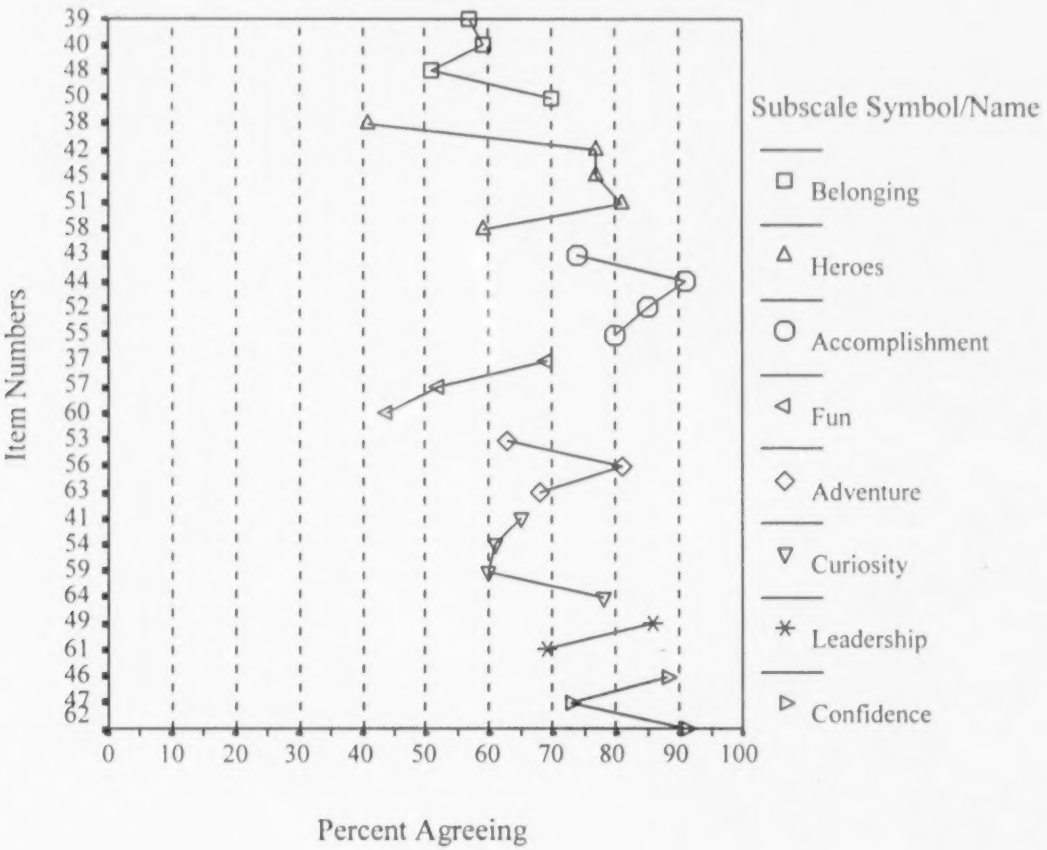

Figure 4: Level of Agreement on Aspirations Subscale Items

All eight subscales had mean averages ranging within a 1-point spread of 3.31 for the Fun and Excitement subscale to 4.19 for the Confidence to Take Action subscale on the 5-point scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Standard deviations for six of the subscales were very similar, ranging only from .63 to .69. However, the Fun and Excitement subscale had a high standard deviation of .94, as did the Belonging subscale at .80, indicating more variance among respondents' scores for items within these subscales. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Aspirations Subscales

Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Belonging	2,266	3.61	.80
Heroes	2,207	3.81	.64
Sense of Accomplishment	2,249	4.11	.63
Fun and Excitement	2,260	3.31	.94
Spirit of Adventure	2,298	3.83	.69
Curiosity and Creativity	2,237	3.72	.68
Leadership/Responsibility	2,307	3.97	.69
Confidence to Take Action	2,244	4.19	.63

Federal Student Survey

A total of 2,387 students responded to this survey. However, due to missing data (skipped items), the number of respondents changes from item to item and is not reported. The students were divided evenly by gender, with 49% male and 51% female. More than half were born in 1988 (54%) and 39% were born in 1987. Eighty-eight percent indicated that they were White, 4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Black or African American, and 6% Other. Most frequently written-in responses for the Other category were some combination of biracial or multiracial classifications. More than a third of the students (38%) indicated their mother attended college or obtained a degree. About a fourth reported the same for their father (27%) or grandparent (24%).

By far, students most frequently turned to a parent or guardian for help with homework, as indicated by 93% agreement. Other usual sources of help included a classmate or friend (62%), a teacher (52%), a brother or sister (45%), or another adult (36%). Less frequent sources included GEAR UP tutors or mentors or some other individual (most frequently identified as a grandparent or other family member).

Only about a third of the students (35%) perceived themselves as either working harder than other students (26%) or much harder (9%). About half (53%) indicated they worked about the same as other students. Nine percent indicated they did not work as hard as other students; 3% indicated that other students worked much harder. Also, 62% classified themselves as good students, 20% as excellent, 16% as fair, and 2% as poor students.

Students were asked to indicate how important others' thoughts were relative to their decisions about education. For each of the nine categories (parent, teacher, guidance counselor, principal, religious leader, friend, coach, GEAR UP staff, or other), less than half of the students indicated that these opinions were not important. Rated most frequently as very important were parent (87%), teacher (53%), and principal (43%). About a third of the students rated each of the other six categories as very important. See Figure 5 for a graphical portrayal of whom students thought were very important in helping them make decisions.

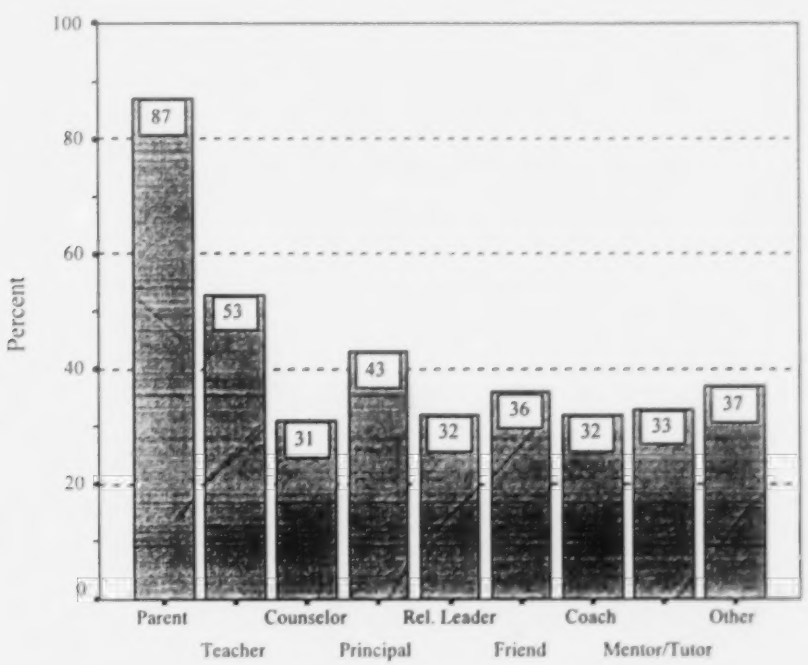

Figure 5: Students' Perceptions of People Who are Very Important to Their Educational Decision Making

Overwhelmingly, most students (94%) were getting information about choices after high school from their parents, followed by teachers (66%) and friends (51%). Less frequent information sources (less than 40%) included siblings, principals, guidance counselors, religious leaders, GEAR UP staff, or others (such as grandparents or other family members). See Figure 6 for a graphical portrayal of from whom students were most likely to get such information

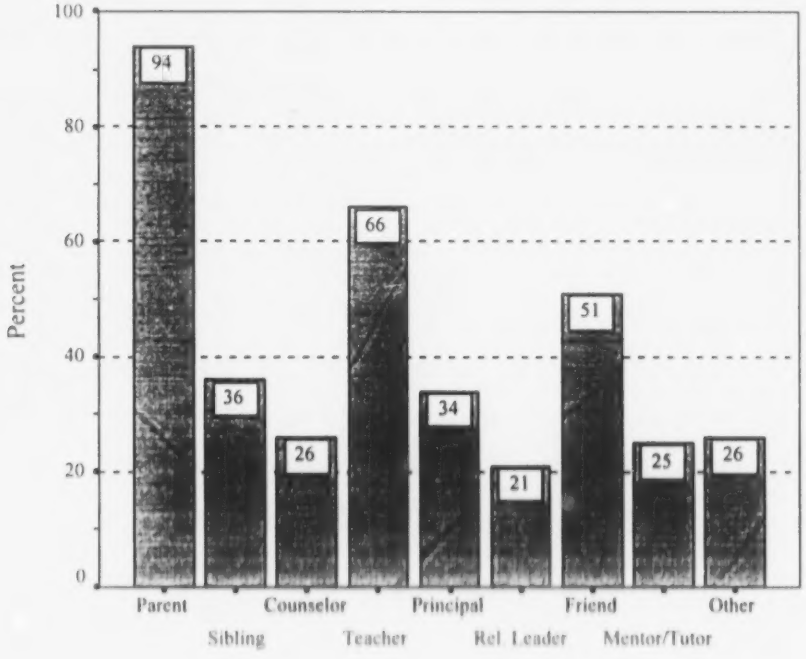

Figure 6: Students' Sources of Information about Post-High-School Choices

Students were asked what level of education they thought they would achieve and what their parents wanted them to achieve. Students most frequently indicated that they did not know what education level they would achieve (55%); 29% believed they would obtain a graduate degree and 11% a bachelor degree. Fifty-five percent believed that their mothers wanted them to get a graduate degree and 17% a bachelor degree. Similarly, 48% believed their fathers wanted them to achieve a graduate degree and 18% a bachelor degree. See Figure 7 for a graphical portrayal of students' expectations and their perceptions of their parents' expectations.

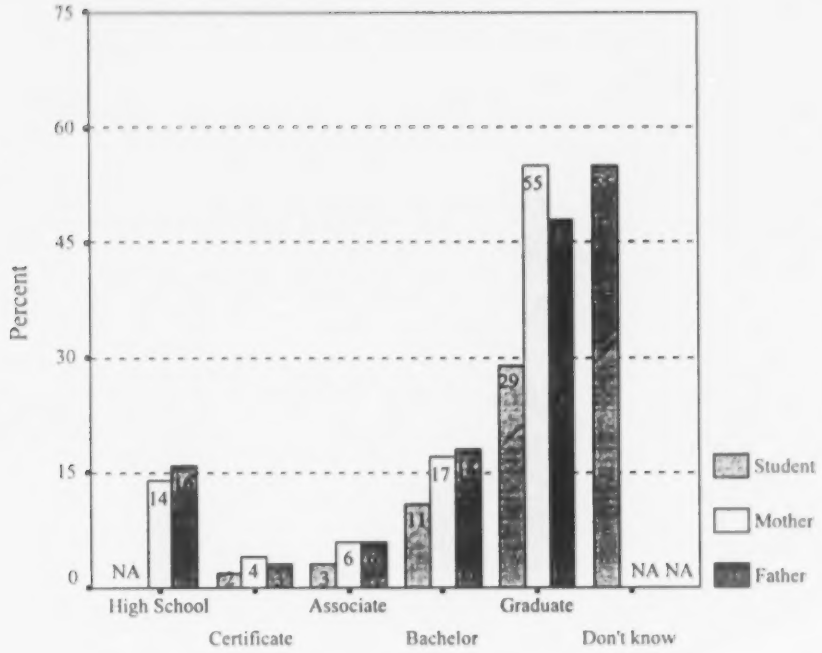

Figure 7: Students' Academic Expectations and Their Perceptions of Their Parents' Expectations for Them

Seventy-one percent of the students believed that they would continue their education after high school, 4% said they would not, and 25% were not sure. When asked why they would not continue their education, more than a third of the students (38%) indicated that expense was the main reason. Relatedly, when asked if they would be able to afford to attend college, only 19% definitely agreed and about a third each said they probably could afford college (34%) or were not sure (33%). The average (median) estimate for currently attending an in-state four-year public college for one year was $6,000.

Only 15% of the students have talked with a school counselor about college entrance requirements and 41% have discussed academic requirements with an adult at home. Seventy-seven percent indicated that they have heard of four-year colleges or universities and 54% each indicated they have heard of two-year or community colleges and vocational or business schools. About half of the students (53%) were aware of what courses they should take to prepare them for college.

Three fourths (75%) of the students indicated that postsecondary education was very important, 13% said it was somewhat important, 2% said it was not important, and 10% did not know. Further, 86% agreed that college graduates earn more money than those without a degree.

Federal Parent Survey

A total of 2,159 mothers and 1,667 fathers responded to this survey. However, due to missing data (skipped items), the number of respondents changes from item to item and is not reported. For the mothers' responses, 98% indicated that they were either the mother or female guardian; other responses included grandmother or stepmother. For the fathers' responses, 98% indicated that they were either the father or male guardian; other responses included stepfather and grandfather.

For both groups, the most frequently obtained level of education was high school (53% mothers, 58% fathers). Mothers also reported less than high school (7%), certificate (15%), associate (10%), bachelor (7%), and graduate (8%). Fathers also reported less than high school (11%), certificate (9%), associate (7%), bachelor (6%), and graduate (8%). Eighty-six percent of the mothers reported that another adult lived in their home, as did 94% of the fathers. Thirteen percent of the mothers and 14% of the fathers reported that someone in their home was currently attending college. Sixty-eight percent of the mothers and 70 percent of the fathers reported that they have a computer in their home.

Responses to ethnicity were almost identical between mothers and fathers. Ninety-six percent of both the mothers and fathers indicated that they were White, 2% of each group indicated American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1% of each group indicated Black or African American. One percent of each group also selected Other, most frequently indicating that they were biracial.

Parents were asked to estimate how many hours each day their child spent on homework for specific subjects; responses between mothers and fathers were very similar. About two thirds of the mothers estimated their child spent about one hour per day each for English (66%), science (63%), math (66%), history/social studies (64%), and all other subjects combined (58%). Slightly less than two thirds of the fathers estimated their child spent one hour per day for each of the same subjects (60%, 57%, 61%, 60%, and 54%, respectively). About 10% of the mothers and 20% of the fathers indicated they didn't know how much time their child spent per day doing homework. Approximately 10% of both groups of parents indicated their child did not have homework.

Parents were then asked how often each week they helped their child with homework in English, science, math, history/social studies, and all other subjects combined. More variance was noted here between parents, with a higher percentage of mothers indicating that they helped their child with homework either frequently (about 20% mothers and 15% fathers) or every day (about 15% mothers and 10% fathers) and a higher percentage of fathers indicating they never helped (about 20% fathers and 10% mothers). Approximately 50% of both mothers and fathers indicated that they occasionally helped their child with each of the specific subjects.

Parents' views were similar on how hard they believed their child works in school. Fifty-eight percent of the mothers and 59% of the fathers indicated that their child worked harder than other students and 8% and 10% respectively indicated much harder. Respectively, 31% and 28% of the mothers and fathers felt that their child did not work as hard as others and 3% of both groups perceived that other students worked much harder. Also, 49% and 50% of the mothers and fathers,

respectively, classified their child as a good student; 28% of the mothers and 29% of the fathers said their child was excellent. About 20% (21% mothers, 19% fathers) felt that their child was a fair student; only 2% of both groups said their child was a poor student.

Only 18% of the mothers and 17% of the fathers indicated that they had talked with someone at their child's school about the courses or grades needed for high school graduation. Further, only a little more than a third of the parents (38% mothers, 39% fathers) felt they had enough information about high school graduation requirements.

Nearly half of the mothers (42%) and a fourth of the fathers (27%) reported occasionally or frequently meeting with their child's teachers to discuss their child's academic progress. Almost half of the mothers (42%) and a third of the fathers (35%) indicated they met once or a few times. Only 16% of the mothers said they never met with their child's teacher, compared to 38% of the fathers.

About a third of the mothers (36%) and a fourth of the fathers (24%) indicated they frequently attended activities at their child's school, while less than half (44% mothers, 42% fathers) indicated they occasionally attended. Twenty percent of the mothers reported they seldom or never attended such activities, compared to 34% of the fathers.

About three fourths of the mothers and fathers (76% each) reported that they were satisfied with the education that their child was receiving, while 12% of the mothers and 11% of the fathers felt very satisfied. Only 12% of the mothers and 13% of the fathers indicated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Only 8% of the mothers and 10% of the fathers reported that they had already talked with someone at their child's school about the courses and grades required to get into college. Eighty-nine percent of the mothers and 81% of the fathers reported that they had already talked with their child about attending college. About a third of both mothers and fathers indicated they were familiar with the entrance requirements for two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and vocational schools.

When asked who provided their child with information about options for continuing education after high school, 97% of the mothers and 91% of the fathers indicated that they provided such information. More than 75% of the parents indicated that some other adult at home (82% mothers, 89% fathers) or a teacher at school (78% mothers, 77% fathers) also provided such information. See Figure 8 for percentages of other most frequent providers of such information.

About two thirds of the mothers (64%) and fathers (65%) indicated they would like their child to obtain a graduate degree. About 20% each (21% mothers, 19% fathers) indicated they hoped their child would obtain a bachelor degree, and 4% of each group indicated an associate degree or a certificate (see Figure 9 for further details). When asked the main reason their child might not continue his or her education after high school, the most frequent responses for both mothers and fathers were that college was too expensive (46% mothers, 43% fathers) and that their child was not interested (22% mothers, 23% fathers).

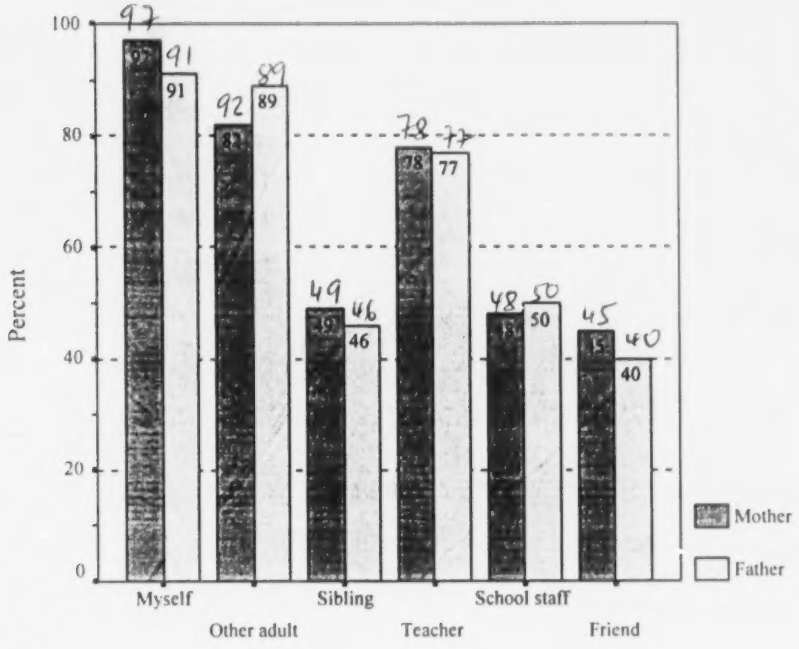

Figure 8: Parents' Perceptions of People Who Provide Educational Information to Their Child

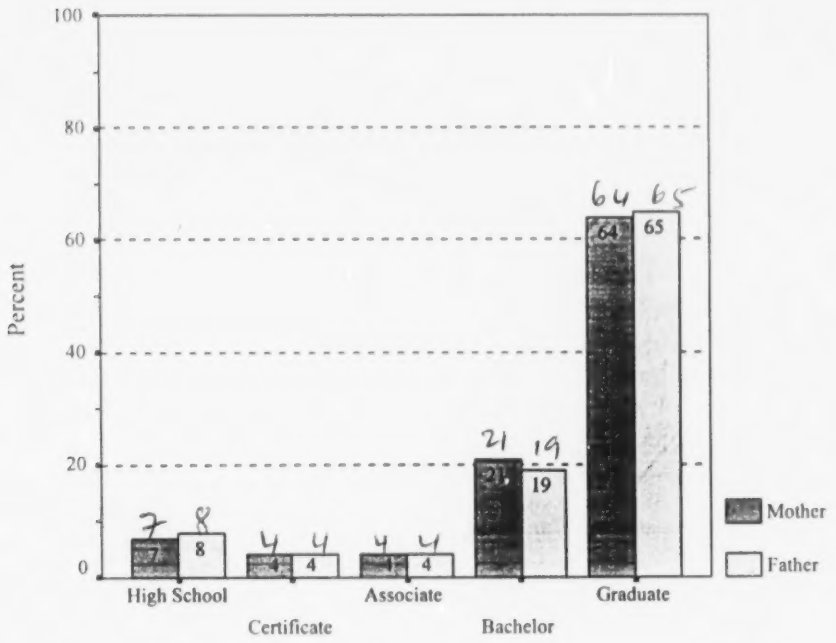

Figure 9: Parents' Academic Expectations for Their Child

Parents were asked to estimate the one-year expense for their child to attend a four-year public college in their state. The $10,000 average (median) estimate was identical for mothers and fathers, and is higher than both the West Virginia and national yearly averages of $6,751 and $8,018, respectively (Snyder and Hoffman, 2000) for tuition plus room and board (WV and national averages for tuition only are $2,337 and $3,226, respectively).

Slightly more than a third of the parents reported that they were saving money for their child's college education (36% mothers, 38% fathers). Less than half of both groups (43% mothers, 46% fathers) thought their child probably or definitely would be able to afford to attend college. About a third (36% mothers, 34% fathers) were not sure, while 21% of the mothers and 20% of the fathers either doubted or were positive their child could not afford college.

When asked if they had heard of a variety of sources for financial aid for education beyond high school, mothers responded slightly more positively than the fathers for each type. However, more than half of all parents reported hearing about each type of aid. Both groups were most aware of federal student loans (88% of mothers and 84% of fathers) and athletic scholarships (84% mothers and 82% fathers). Both groups were least familiar with federal work-study programs (60% mothers and 55% fathers) and institutional scholarships (61% mothers and 60% fathers). See Figure 10 for a graphical depiction of parents' awareness of various sources of financial aid.

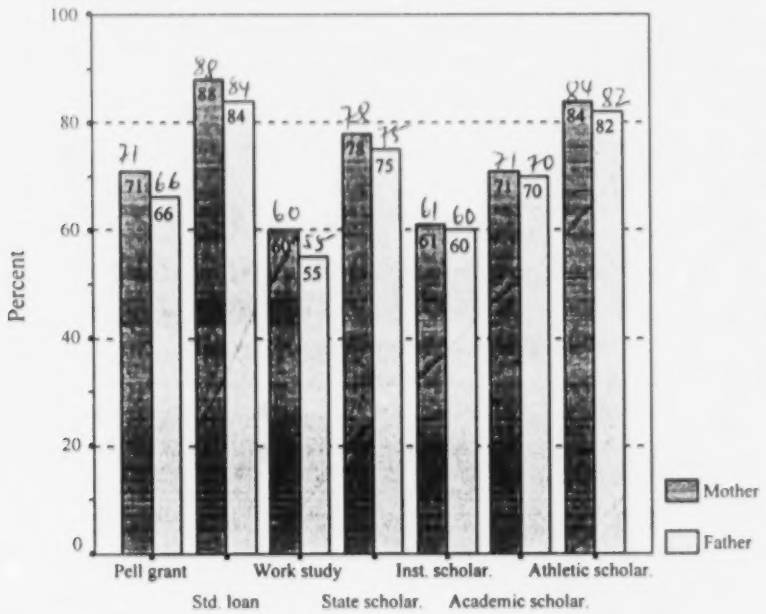

Figure 10: Parents' Awareness of Financial Aid Sources

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Mothers' and fathers' responses were slightly different when asked if they thought their child would likely qualify for enough financial aid to attend college. More than half of both groups (55% mothers, 56% fathers) did not know and slightly more than a third (38% mothers, 36% fathers) responded that their child would likely qualify for such aid.

Finally, parents were given a listing of potential topics for free workshops and were asked to indicate which they would be interested in attending. For each of the 13 given topics, the mothers were consistently more interested in attending than the fathers. Both groups indicated most interest in topics relating to computers, college requirements, and child rearing. Both groups were least interested in improving their own academic skills. See Figure 11 for a graphical depiction of the six workshop topics of most interest to both mothers and fathers.

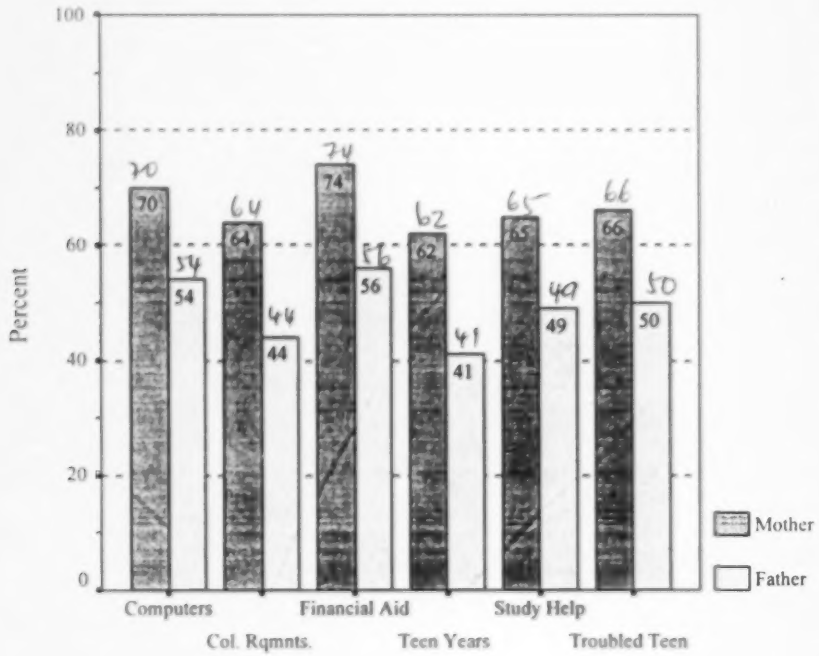

Figure 11: Six Workshop Topics of Most Interest to Parents

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CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the Fairmont State College regional GEAR UP data for West Virginia seventh-grade students and their parents. These conclusions are presented below by topical themes.

Academics

- Homework seems to be especially heavy for the majority of students. More than half of the parents and students report that students spend about five hours per day on homework. This estimate, which seems so high as to be unrealistic, is probably due, at least in part, to poor item construction on the survey, since one hour is the smallest increment a respondent could choose other than "never" in the response options for each of the five subjects.

- Overall, students seem to have a positive view of their academic abilities and of the effort they put into their studies. Two thirds view themselves as good students and almost a fourth believe they are excellent students. Further, half believe they work as hard as other students and a third report that they work harder or much harder. Parents have a slightly higher perception of the effort their child puts into education. Almost three fourths perceive that their child works harder or much harder than other children and that their child is either an excellent or good student.

- In general, students believe that they have good study skills and report doing well in English, math, science, and history. For those not doing well, their most frequent explanations are that they have a grade of C or D, that they don't do well on tests, or that they don't understand the subject. About half of the students believe they do need help with a specific subject, most often math. Students seem fairly open to the idea of tutoring, with about a third expressing interest in an after-school tutoring program and two thirds expressing interest in a mentoring system.

- The majority of students seem to be technologically literate. Two thirds report having used a computer for homework or school projects and that they have already taken a computer class at school. Further, nearly three fourths have a computer at home, most with Internet access, and report that their parents use a computer as well.

Parent Involvement

- Family members seem to play a critical role in helping students understand and complete homework tasks. The majority of students report that they first look to a parent for such help and also frequently consult with a sibling, a grandparent, or some other family member. Parents do not seem to place as much value on their contribution to their child's homework. Less than half of the parents report helping their child frequently or every day, with mothers generally helping more than fathers.

- Parent involvement in school-based activities seems to be limited in scope. About half of the mothers and a fourth of the fathers report that they occasionally or frequently meet with their child's teachers. However, nearly 40% of the fathers report never meeting with a teacher, compared to only about 15% of the mothers. About three fourths of the mothers and two thirds of the fathers report they occasionally or frequently attend activities at their child's school. Again, a third of the fathers report never attending, compared to only about 20% of the mothers.

- Mothers are consistently more interested than fathers in attending free educational workshops. About three fourths of the mothers are interested in topics such as computers, college requirements, and child rearing, compared to only about half of the fathers.

Student Aspirations

- Students report being well supported in the areas of confidence to take action, sense of accomplishment, and leadership and responsibility. They report feeling less well supported in fun and excitement, belonging, and curiosity and creativity. In other words, while students report fairly strong views of feeling confident and responsible for their own learning, they do not seem to view their learning as particularly interesting or exciting, do not feel that they are given the opportunity for exploration or investigation, and do not feel that teachers particularly value their thoughts or feelings.

- Overall, student and parent aspirations are high in regard to the student's postsecondary education. Almost half of the students believe that htey will obtain either a bachelor or graduate degree, almost three fourths believe their mother wants them to get a bachelor or graduate degree, and two thirds believe the same for their fathers. The majority of students report that their parents expect them to go to college and more than three fourths of the parents report wanting their child to obtain either a bachelor or graduate degree.

- There is a high percentage of students and parents who indicate a desire for the student to achieve a graduate degree rather than a bachelor degree. About a third of the students expect to achieve a graduate degree, half think their parents want them to achieve this educational level, and two thirds of the parents report wanting their child to obtain a graduate degree. It may be that both respondent groups are interpreting "graduate" as a graduate of a four-year college rather than the intended master or doctoral degree.

College Awareness and Preparation

- Overall, students seem to be at least superficially thinking about the prospect of college. Nearly all the students believe that they have the ability to go to college and believe that college graduates earn more money. About three fourths perceive college as very important and indicate that they do want to attend a postsecondary institution. About two thirds believe they need more education to get a satisfying job and that continuing their education might help them make career decisions. Further, students most frequently mentioned occupations that require college (i.e., veterinarian, doctor, lawyer, teacher).

- Students' awareness of the various types of postsecondary institutions is fairly low. While nearly three fourths are aware of four-year colleges, only half know about two-year colleges or vocational schools. And, while half of the students report having discussed college requirements with an adult at home, only 15% have talked with a school counselor. Similarly, most parents report they have discussed college options with their child, but have not had discussions with school personnel about required courses and grades.

- Students do not seem to have a real understanding of what is required of them now to begin preparing for college. Only half know which courses are needed to adequately prepare them and report that they plan to take such academically challenging courses as chemistry, algebra, or a foreign language. Only a third plan to take physics and less than a fourth plan to take calculus or trigonometry.

- Students view parents and teachers as their best sources of information regarding academic choices and most value their input to educational decision making. However, only about a third of the parents are familiar with college entrance requirements and less than a third believe they have enough information on high school graduation requirements.

- There seems to be a wide range in the level of parent and student awareness regarding financial aid options for postsecondary education. While more than half of the parents report that they are aware of the various types of available financial aid, only a third believe their child will qualify for such aid. Further, only about half of the parents and students believe that the students probably or definitely will be able to afford college. Both parents and students perceive financial difficulties to be the greatest deterrent to postsecondary education.

- Parents seem to have an inflated picture of college expenses, with a median estimate of $10,000 per year, which is higher than both the West Virginia and national yearly averages ($6,751 and $8,018 respectively) for tuition plus room and board at a four-year in-state public college (WV and national averages for tuition only are $2,337 and $3,226, respectively). However, due to item construction, it is not known whether parents' estimates are solely for tuition or for tuition plus room and board. About one third of the parents report they are already saving money for their child's education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GEAR UP project can make a substantial difference in West Virginia students' lives by working to alleviate some of the educational and environmental problems within the state. Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this report, the following recommendations are made to Fairmont State College GEAR UP staff in the interest of increasing students' and parents' awareness of and interest in postsecondary education.

- Establish tutoring and mentoring programs and encourage student participation.
- Encourage more students to plan on taking higher-level academic courses, especially focusing on physics, calculus, and trigonometry.
- Emphasize the importance of taking more challenging college-preparatory courses to prepare students for postsecondary education.
- Help all students understand that college is a viable option for them and provide information about degree requirements for various career choices.
- Provide students and parents with information about and entrance requirements for both two- and four-year colleges, as well as for vocational and business schools.
- Provide students and parents with information about and requirements for various financial aid sources for financing postsecondary education.
- Work to find ways to increase parents' involvement in the academic lives of their children, beyond occasionally meeting with teachers or attending school activities.
- Establish a schedule of educational workshops for parents on the topics of computers, college requirements and financial aid options, and child-rearing (such as helping kids study, knowing the signs of a troubled teen, and understanding teens).
- In terms of improving data collection for the next year's survey of incoming seventh graders, seven suggestions are offered. First, revise wording on items dealing with perceived degree expectations to alleviate any misinterpretations regarding a "graduate" degree. Second, convert the surveys to a scannable format in order to reduce data entry time and expense. Third, combine both student surveys into one streamlined survey. Fourth, add appropriate items to the two student aspirations subscales (leadership and adventure) that produced the lowest internal consistency reliabilities. Fifth, reconstruct the response options for homework-related items to include half-hour increments. Sixth, clarify the wording on the estimated expense for attending one year at a four-year in-state public college to specify that the estimate should only include tuition (not room and board). Seventh, clarify items related to parents' use of a computer to specify home usage only.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A:
Completed SEDCAR Checklist

AEL SEDCAR Standards Checklist

The *Standards for Educational Data Collection and Reporting* (1991) were used in the development of this (check one):

- ☐ Study group report
- ☐ Field test report
- ☐ Minigrant final report
- ☐ Implementation report
- ☒ Research report
- ☐ Impact study report
- ☐ Other _____

The SEDCAR Standards were consulted and used as indicated in the table below (check or mark as appropriate):

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
1.1 Creating an Infrastructure to Manage Data Collection Activities	X			
1.2 Justifying Data Collection Activities	X			
1.3 Fostering Commitment of all Participants	X			
1.4 Creating an Appropriate Management Process	X			
2.1 Formulating and Refining Study Questions	X			
2.2 Choosing the Data Collection Methods	X			
2.3 Developing a Sampling Plan			X (population study)	
2.4 Assessing the Value of Obtainable Data	X			
2.5 Transforming Study Question Concepts into Measures	X			
2.6 Designing the Data Collection Instrument	X			
2.7 Minimizing Total Study Error (Sampling and Nonsampling)	X			
2.8 Reviewing and Pretesting Data Collection Instruments, Forms, and Procedures	X			
2.9 Preparing a Written Design	X			
3.1 Preparing for Data Collection	X			
3.2 Selecting and Training Data Collection Staff		X(due to comprehensiveness of data collection and limited resources)		
3.3 Ethical Treatment of Data Providers	X			
3.4 Minimizing Burden and Nonresponse	X			
3.5 Implementing Data Collection Quality Control Procedures	X			

*Four column headings from Evaluation *Standards*.

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
3.6 Documenting Data Collections	X			
4.1 Planning Systems Requirements	X			
4.2 Designing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.3 Developing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.4 Testing Data Processing Systems			X(standard	software)
4.5 Planning for Data Preparation	X			
4.6 Preparing Data for Processing and Analysis	X			
4.7 Maintaining Programs and Data Files	X			
4.8 Documenting Data Processing Activities	X			
4.9 Evaluating Data Processing Systems	X			
5.1 Preparing an Analysis Plan	X			
5.2 Developing Analysis Variables	X			
5.3 Applying Appropriate Weights			X	
5.4 Estimating Sampling and Nonsampling Errors			X	
5.5 Determining Statistical Significance	X			
6.1 Presenting Findings	X			
6.2 Reviewing the Report	X			
6.3 Releasing Data	X			
6.4 Disseminating Data	X			
6.5 Preparing Documentation and Technical Reports	X			

Name: Kimberly S. Cowley (typed) Date: February 20, 2001

Kimberly S. Cowley (signature)

Position or Title: Research Associate

Agency: AEL, Inc.

Address: Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325

Relation to Document: Author
(e.g., author of document, co-author, project director, project supervisor)

Appendix B:
Regional Summary by Survey

Fairmont State College: GEAR UP Partnership Grant
2000-2001 AEL/FSC 7th Grade Student Survey

Identification Code: 7/18/2000

__ __ __ - __ __ - __ __ __ __ - __ __ - __ __

Includes 9 counties with a total of 2,414 respondents

Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents for each item.
Please place a checkmark (✓) or write in your answer, as appropriate.

1. How many brothers do you have? 1 average How many sisters? 1 average

2. Counting yourself, how many people live in your home? 4 average

3. What do you want to be when you grow up? *(Check only one.)*

3%	Actor/actress	2%	Designer/decorator	2%	Mechanic	2%	Race-car driver
2%	Architect	7%	Doctor	3%	Military	3%	Scientist
3%	Artist	13%	Don't know	0%	News correspondent	1%	Secretary
14%	Athlete (any sport)	2%	Engineer	3%	Nurse	5%	Teacher
3%	Beautician	0%	Flight attendant	1%	Pilot	10%	Veterinarian
2%	Construction worker	5%	Lawyer	2%	Police officer	1%	Writer

11% Other Top Responses: Singer, Computer/Video, Photographer, Pharmacist, Truck Driver

4. For each of the following subjects, about how many hours each day do you spend on homework?

	None	*1*	*2*	*3 or more*	*Not Taking*
English	24%	70%	4%	1%	2%
Science	26%	64%	6%	1%	2%
Math	14%	68%	13%	2%	2%
History/Social Studies	21%	67%	9%	2%	2%
All other subjects	26%	64%	7%	2%	1%

5. I am doing well (grade of A or B) in math. ⇒ 77% Yes 20% No 3% Not Taking
If "No," why not? *(Check as many as apply.)*
45% Don't do well on tests
16% Don't do all the assignments
14% Don't know
53% Have a C or D
30% Don't understand the subject
12% Don't pay enough attention in class
26% Don't study hard enough
6% Other Top Responses: Too hard, just not good at

6. I am doing well (grade of A or B) in English. ⇒ 82% Yes 16% No 2% Not Taking
If "No," why not? *(Check as many as apply.)*
31% Don't do well on tests
15% Don't do all the assignments
16% Don't know
49% Have a C or D
24% Don't understand the subject
9% Don't pay attention in class
23% Don't study hard enough
5% Other Top Response: Reading problem

7. I am doing well (grade of A or B) in science. ⇒ 82% Yes 14% No 3% Not Taking
If "No," why not? *(Check as many as apply.)*
36% Don't do well on tests
14% Don't do all the assignments
17% Don't know
52% Have a C or D
21% Don't understand the subject
8% Don't pay attention in class
18% Don't study hard enough
4% Other Top Responses: Boring, Don't like it

8. I am doing well (grade of A or B) in history. ⇒ 79% Yes 17% No 5% Not Taking
If "No," why not? *(Check as many as apply.)*
38% Don't do well on tests
13% Don't do all the assignments
15% Don't know
48% Have a C or D
20% Don't understand the subject
13% Don't pay attention in class
22% Don't study hard enough
5% Other Top Response: Don't like it

Continue

9. I need help with some of my classes. ➡ 44% Yes 56% No
If "Yes," which classes? *(Check as many as apply.)*
29% English 62% Math 27% Social Studies
23% History 26% Science 7% Other Top Responses: Reading, Spelling, French

10. What is your favorite class in school? *(Check only one.)*
8% English 7% History 18% Science
33% Gym/Physical Education 22% Math 11% Other Top Responses: Reading, Band, Art, Spelling

Why is this your favorite class? *(Check as many as apply.)*
55% It's fun/cool 37% I like the teacher 20% It's challenging
40% I like the subject 36% It's easy to understand 22% I like the hands-on activities
6% Other Top Responses: Good at subject, Enjoy physical activity, Singing

11. Do your parents want you to go to college? ➡ 82% Yes 2% No 15% Don't know

12. Do you want to go to college after high school? ➡ 75% Yes 7% No 18% Maybe
If "No," why not? *(Check only one.)*
15% Grades not good enough 24% Don't have the money
34% College isn't important to me 27% Other Top Responses: Don't need for planned job, Just don't want to go

13. Which of the following courses do you plan on taking in high school? *(Check as many as apply.)*
55% Algebra 57% Chemistry 37% Physics
23% Calculus 63% Foreign language 23% Trigonometry

Indicate Yes or No for each of the following items.

14. I think I have good study skills. 76% Yes 24% No

15. I would be interested in attending an after-school tutoring or helping program, if one was offered. 37% Yes 63% No

16. I think I have the ability to go to college. 90% Yes 10% No

17. In school, I participate in sports. 62% Yes 38% No

18. In school, I participate in clubs. 40% Yes 60% No

19. In school, I participate in student government. 17% Yes 83% No

20. Do you use a computer for homework or school projects? 65% Yes 35% No

21. Have you taken a computer class at school? 66% Yes 34% No

22. Do you have a computer at home? 71% Yes 29% No
If yes, do you have Internet access? 79% Yes 21% No

23. Do your parents use a computer? 71% Yes 29% No

24. Do you plan to be living in WV when you're 30? 52% Yes 48% No

25. Do you plan to be working in WV when you're 30? 49% Yes 51% No

26. I would be interested in having a "college-type" mentor or buddy. 62% Yes 38% No

Continue

Using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), circle the number that indicates your level of agreement for each of the following items. (Highest percentages in blue print.)

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Don't Know*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
27. I need more education or training after high school to get a satisfying job.	1 4%	2 8%	3 27%	4 31%	5 29%
28. I want to make some money immediately after high school.	1 2%	2 5%	3 15%	4 34%	5 45%
29. I plan to continue my education after high school, no matter what my career might be.	1 4%	2 4%	3 24%	4 27%	5 40%
30. I can get a satisfying job without further education after high school.	1 27%	2 25%	3 27%	4 13%	5 7%
31. Continuing my education after high school might help me decide what I want to do.	1 4%	2 5%	3 17%	4 46%	5 28%
32. I am anxious to begin working in my career as soon as possible after high school.	1 6%	2 13%	3 27%	4 28%	5 25%
33. The opinions and plans of my friends help me make decisions for after high school.	1 15%	2 26%	3 27%	4 26%	5 7%
34. Getting a job right after high school might help me decide what I want to do.	1 9%	2 15%	3 29%	4 35%	5 12%
35. I won't be able to afford to continue my education after high school.	1 27%	2 24%	3 36%	4 7%	5 6%
36. The opinions and plans of my family help me make decisions for after high school.	1 6%	2 11%	3 19%	4 45%	5 20%
37. I usually have fun in class.	1 8%	2 10%	3 15%	4 51%	5 17%
38. I am a positive role model to other students.	1 8%	2 9%	3 44%	4 28%	5 12%
39. Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	1 5%	2 6%	3 34%	4 36%	5 20%
40. Teachers respect my thoughts.	1 5%	2 6%	3 32%	4 39%	5 18%
41. I seek solutions to complex problems.	1 3%	2 6%	3 27%	4 47%	5 17%
42. I have a strong caring relationship with an adult.	1 3%	2 5%	3 16%	4 38%	5 39%
43. Teachers care about my success in class.	1 3%	2 3%	3 22%	4 42%	5 31%
44. I believe I can always improve.	1 1%	2 2%	3 7%	4 40%	5 50%
45. Teachers expect me to succeed.	1 2%	2 2%	3 20%	4 41%	5 36%
46. I am confident in my ability to do well.	1 2%	2 2%	3 9%	4 43%	5 44%

Continue

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Don't Know*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
47. I take action on causes I believe in.	1 3%	2 3%	3 23%	4 47%	5 25%
48. Teachers value my opinions.	1 4%	2 5%	3 41%	4 38%	5 12%
49. I accept responsibility for my actions.	1 2%	2 3%	3 11%	4 55%	5 30%
50. I am proud of my school.	1 6%	2 7%	3 18%	4 44%	5 25%
51. Teachers help me to succeed.	1 2%	2 3%	3 14%	4 52%	5 29%
52. I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal.	1 1%	2 2%	3 12%	4 51%	5 33%
53. Teachers support me when I try something new.	1 3%	2 6%	3 30%	4 42%	5 20%
54. My courses help me to understand what is happening in my everyday life.	1 3%	2 7%	3 28%	4 44%	5 17%
55. Teachers tell me I do a good job when I try my best.	1 3%	2 6%	3 12%	4 50%	5 29%
56. I am eager to learn new things.	1 2%	2 4%	3 14%	4 48%	5 32%
57. Teachers make learning exciting.	1 8%	2 13%	3 27%	4 38%	5 13%
58. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	1 6%	2 10%	3 26%	4 32%	5 26%
59. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting.	1 5%	2 10%	3 27%	4 44%	5 15%
60. I am not usually bored in school.	1 17%	2 21%	3 18%	4 32%	5 11%
61. Teachers expect me to be a good decision-maker.	1 2%	2 3%	3 27%	4 45%	5 23%
62. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.	1 1%	2 2%	3 7%	4 35%	5 55%
63. I have opportunities to decide for myself what I learn about in school.	1 4%	2 7%	3 20%	4 44%	5 24%
64. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.	1 3%	2 5%	3 15%	4 43%	5 33%

Developed by Fairmont State College GEAR UP project in partnership with AEL, Inc.

Items 37-64 used from the *Students Speak* survey developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine.

REGION: JANUARY 2001

Fairmont State College: GEAR UP Partnership Grant
2000-2001 7th Grade Student Survey

Identification Code: 7/18/2000

__ __ __ - __ __ - __ __ __ __ - __ __ - __ __

Includes 9 counties with a total of 2,387 respondents.

Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents for each item.
Please place a checkmark (✓) or write in your answer, as appropriate.

School and School Work

1. Who usually helps you with your homework?

	Yes	*No*
A teacher at your school	☐ 52%	☐ 48%
A GEAR UP tutor	☐ 4%	☐ 96%
A GEAR UP mentor	☐ 4%	☐ 96%
Your mother, father, or guardian	☐ 93%	☐ 7%
Another adult in your home	☐ 36%	☐ 64%
Your brother or sister	☐ 45%	☐ 55%
A classmate or friend	☐ 62%	☐ 38%
Some other person Top Responses: Grandparent, Aunt/uncle/cousin, Other family member	☐ 19%	☐ 81%

2. Compared with other students, how hard do you think you work in school?

Much less Hard	*Not as Hard*	*About Same*	*Harder*	*Much Harder*
☐ 3%	☐ 9%	☐ 54%	☐ 26%	☐ 9%

3. What type of student do you consider yourself to be?

Poor	*Fair*	*Good*	*Excellent*
☐ 2%	☐ 16%	☐ 62%	☐ 20%

4. How important to you is what each of the following people think you should do about your education?

	Not Impt.	*Some Impt.*	*Very Impt.*
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	☐ 2%	☐ 12%	☐ 87%
Teacher(s)	☐ 8%	☐ 39%	☐ 53%
Guidance counselor(s)	☐ 26%	☐ 44%	☐ 31%
Principal or assistant principal	☐ 20%	☐ 37%	☐ 43%
Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi, etc.)	☐ 29%	☐ 39%	☐ 32%
Friend(s)	☐ 18%	☐ 47%	☐ 36%
Coach	☐ 30%	☐ 38%	☐ 32%
GEAR UP staff (mentors, tutors, staff, etc.)	☐ 34%	☐ 33%	☐ 33%
Some other person Top Responses: Grandparents, Brother or Sister, Other family member	☐ 49%	☐ 14%	☐ 37%

Knowledge about College

5. Have you talked with your school counselor or someone else at your school about the entrance requirements for college?

Yes	*No*
☐ 15%	☐ 85%

6. Do you have an idea of what courses you should take in high school to prepare you for college?

Yes	*No*
☐ 53%	☐ 47%

7. Have you heard of the following types of postsecondary schools?

	Yes	*No*
Two-year or community college	☐ 54%	☐ 46%
Four-year college or university	☐ 77%	☐ 23%
Vocational, trade, or business school	☐ 54%	☐ 46%

Continue

8. How much do you think it costs to attend a four-year public college in your state for one year? $6,000 average

9. How important to your future is getting an education beyond high school?

Don't Know	*Not Impt.*	*Some Impt.*	*Very Impt.*
☐ 10%	☐ 2%	☐ 13%	☐ 75%

10. Do you think a person with a college degree earns more money in one year than a person who does not have a college degree?

Yes	*No*
☐ 86%	☐ 14%

Plans for the Future

11. Do you think you will continue your education after high school (that is, go to college or attend a trade school, etc.)?

Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*
☐71%	☐ 4%	☐25%

12. From whom do you get most of your information about your options for continuing your education after high school?

	Yes	*No*
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	☐94%	☐ 6%
Brother(s) or sister(s)	☐36%	☐64%
Guidance counselor(s)	☐26%	☐74%
Teacher(s)	☐66%	☐34%
Principal or assistant principal	☐34%	☐66%
Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi, etc.)	☐21%	☐79%
Friend(s)	☐51%	☐49%
An adult in the GEAR UP program	☐25%	☐75%
Some other person Top Responses: Grandparent, Aunt/ Uncle/Cousin, Other family member	☐26%	☐74%

13. How far in school do you think you will get after high school? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐ 2% Certificate program (less than two-year program)
- ☐ 3% Associates degree (AA)
- ☐11% Bachelors degree (BA)
- ☐29% Graduate degree (MA, Ph.D., law, MD)
- ☐55% Don't know

14. What is the main reason you would not continue your education after high school? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐38% It costs too much or I cannot afford it
- ☐11% I need or want to work
- ☐10% My grades are not good enough
- ☐10% I'm just not interested
- ☐ 9% I want to join the military service
- ☐10% I want to start a family or I need to take care of my family
- ☐11% Some other reason Top Responses: Definitely will attend college, Don't know, Not needed for planned job, Leaving home

15. Do you think you will be able to afford to attend a four-year college or university after high school?

Definitely Not	*Doubt It*	*Not Sure*	*Probably*	*Definitely*
☐ 4%	☐ 9%	☐33%	☐34%	☐19%

Continue

Your Family

16. During the past year, have you discussed academic requirements for attending a 4-year college with any adults in your household?

Yes	*No*
☐41%	☐59%

17. Did any of your family members attend or get a college degree?

	Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*
Mother or female guardian	☐38%	☐42%	☐20%
Father or male guardian	☐27%	☐49%	☐24%
Brother(s) or sister(s)	☐16%	☐71%	☐13%
Grandparent(s)	☐24%	☐28%	☐48%

18. How much education do you think your parent(s) or guardian(s) want you to get? *(Check one box in each column.)*

	Father	*Mother*
Does not apply	☐ 6%	☐ 3%
Less than high school graduation	☐ 3%	☐ 1%
High school graduation	☐16%	☐14%
Certificate program	☐ 3%	☐ 4%
Associates degree (AA)	☐ 6%	☐ 6%
Bachelors degree (BA)	☐18%	☐17%
Graduate degree (MA, Ph.D., law, MD)	☐48%	☐55%

Background

19. What is your gender?

Male	*Female*
☐49%	☐51%

20. When were you born?

1986 (5%), 1987 (39%), 1988 (54%)
Month Day Year

21. How do you describe yourself?

- ☐ 4% American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ 0% Asian
- ☐ 1% Black or African American
- ☐ 0% Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pac. Islander
- ☐88% White
- ☐ 6% Other Top Response. Bi-Racial, Multi-Racial

PLEASE STOP HERE. DO NOT COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION.

GEAR UP Participation

22. Overall, how much would you say you participate in the GEAR UP program?

Never	*Some-times*	*Half Time*	*Most Time*	*Always*
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. During the past school year, how often did you attend each of the following activities provided by the GEAR UP program?

	Not Offered	*Never*	*Few Times*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*	*Every Day*
Tutoring in math	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tutoring in English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tutoring in other academic subjects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tutoring for SAT, ACT, or other college entrance exam	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other tutoring (what?) _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Computer-assisted lab, any type	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. (continued)

	Not Offered	*Never*	*Few Times*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*	*Every Day*
Mentoring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Class at a college (what?) _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counseling/advising for college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counseling, personal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on college preparation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on study skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on careers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other workshop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job site visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural event	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Some other type of visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College student shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College professional shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other shadowing (what?) _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
GEAR UP family activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. Overall, how satisfied are you with the GEAR UP program?

Very Dissat.	*Dissat-isfied*	*Satis-fied*	*Very Satisfied*
☐	☐	☐	☐

25. How satisfied are you with the services you received from the program for each of the following services?

	Did not Attend	*Very Dissat.*	*Dissat-isfied*	*Satis-fied*	*Very Satisfied*
Tutoring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mentoring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Class at a college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Counseling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College campus visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job site visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural event	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College student shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College professional shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. As part of your participation in the GEAR UP program, have you received a 21st Century Scholar Certificate?
(This certificate indicates how much financial assistance you may be eligible to receive from the federal government for college.)

Yes	*No*
☐	☐

If "Yes," has receiving the certificate changed your plans about college?

Yes	*No*
☐	☐

27. Has being in the GEAR UP program changed your plans about going to college?

Yes	*No*
☐	☐

If "Yes," what was the biggest factor? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐ Information about financial aid and how much college costs
- ☐ Information about the benefits of going to college
- ☐ Tutoring or help with school work
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Visits to college campus
- ☐ Other (what?) _____

Fairmont State College: GEAR UP Partnership Grant
2000-2001 Parent Survey

MOTHERS

Identification Code: 7/18/2000

__ __ __ - __ __ - __ __ __ __ - __ __ - __ __

Includes 9 counties with a total of 2,159 respondents

Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents for each item.

Instructions: This survey is intended for the parents or guardians of the 7th grade student. It is very important to gather as much information as possible; therefore we need **both** parents or guardians to complete a copy of the survey if possible. If this is a single-parent household, please disregard the second copy. Thanks for your participation!

Please place a checkmark (✓) or write in your answer, as appropriate.

General Information

1. What is your relationship to the seventh-grade child who brought this survey home?

- ☐ 0% Father or male guardian
- ☐ 98% Mother or female guardian
- ☐ 2% Other Top Responses: Grandmother, Stepmother

Your Child

2. For each of the following subjects, about how much time each day does your child spend on homework?

	None	*1*	*2*	*3 or More*	*Not Taking*	*Don't Know*
English	☐ 13%	☐ 66%	☐ 7%	☐ 2%	☐ 1%	☐ 11%
Science	☐ 14%	☐ 63%	☐ 8%	☐ 2%	☐ 2%	☐ 12%
Math	☐ 7%	☐ 66%	☐ 12%	☐ 5%	☐ 2%	☐ 9%
History/Social Studies	☐ 12%	☐ 64%	☐ 9%	☐ 2%	☐ 1%	☐ 11%
All other subjects	☐ 15%	☐ 58%	☐ 7%	☐ 2%	☐ 1%	☐ 17%

3. For each of the following subjects, about how often each week do you help your child with homework?

	Never	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*	*Every Day*	*Not Taking*
English	☐ 10%	☐ 53%	☐ 21%	☐ 14%	☐ 1%
Science	☐ 11%	☐ 53%	☐ 20%	☐ 14%	☐ 2%
Math	☐ 10%	☐ 44%	☐ 25%	☐ 19%	☐ 1%
History/Social Studies	☐ 11%	☐ 53%	☐ 21%	☐ 14%	☐ 1%
All other subjects	☐ 12%	☐ 55%	☐ 18%	☐ 14%	☐ 1%

4. Compared with other students, how hard do you think your child works in school?

Much less Hard	*Not as Hard*	*Harder*	*Much Harder*
☐ 3%	☐ 31%	☐ 58%	☐ 8%

5. What type of student do you consider your child to be? Think about your child's academic performance and his or her study habits.

Poor	*Fair*	*Good*	*Excellent*
☐ 2%	☐ 21%	☐ 49%	☐ 28%

6. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses or grades your child needs in order to graduate from high school?

Yes	*No*
☐ 18%	☐ 82%

7. Do you feel you have enough information about the graduation requirements for high school?

Yes	*No*
☐ 38%	☐ 62%

8. How often do you attend activities or events at your child's school?

Never	*Seldom*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*
☐ 6%	☐ 14%	☐ 44%	☐ 36%

Continue

9. How often do you meet with your child's teachers to discuss the academic progress of your child?

Never	*Once*	*Few Times*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*
☐16%	☐10%	☐32%	☐33%	☐ 9%

10. How satisfied are you with the education your child is currently receiving?

Very Dissat.	*Dissat-isfied*	*Satis-fied*	*Very Satisfied*
☐ 2%	☐10%	☐76%	☐12%

Your Child's Future Plans

11. Who provides your child with information about options for continuing his or her education after high school?

	Yes	*No*
Myself	☐ 97%	☐ 3%
Other adults at home	☐ 82%	☐ 18%
Siblings	☐ 49%	☐ 51%
Teacher(s) at school	☐ 78%	☐ 22%
Coach at school	☐ 24%	☐ 76%
Other school staff	☐ 48%	☐ 52%
Child's friends	☐ 45%	☐ 55%
GEAR UP tutor	☐ 16%	☐ 84%
GEAR UP mentor	☐ 15%	☐ 85%
Other GEAR UP staff	☐ 16%	☐ 84%
Someone else Top Responses: Grandparent, Aunt/uncle/ cousin, Other family member	☐ 36%	☐ 64%

12. How far in school would you like to see your child go?

Less than High School	*High School*	*Certi-ficate*	*Asso-ciates*	*Bach-elors*	*Grad-uate*
☐ 1%	☐ 7%	☐ 4%	☐ 4%	☐21%	☐64%

13. If your child does not continue his/her education after high school, what would be the main reason? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐46% It costs too much or cannot afford it
- ☐ 1% College is too far from home
- ☐ 5% H/she needs or wants to work
- ☐ 6% His/her grades are not good enough
- ☐ 4% It is not necessary for what he/she wants to do
- ☐22% He/she is not interested
- ☐ 4% He/she wants to join the military
- ☐13% Some other reason

Knowledge About College

14. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses and grades he/she needs to get into college?

Yes	*No*
☐ 8%	☐92%

15. Are you familiar with the entrance requirements for the three basic types of postsecondary schools?

	Yes	*No*
Two-year college	☐32%	☐68%
Four-year college or university	☐35%	☐65%
Vocational, trade, or business school	☐32%	☐68%

16. Have you talked with your child about attending college?

Yes	*No*
☐89%	☐11%

17. How much do you think it costs to attend a four-year public college in your state for one year?

$ 10,000 average

18. Have you started saving any money for your child's college education?

Yes	*No*
☐36%	☐64%

Continue

19. Do you think your child would be able to afford to attend a public four-year college or university after high school?

Definitely Not	*Doubt It*	*Not Sure*	*Probably*	*Definitely*
☐ 7%	☐ 14%	☐ 36%	☐ 28%	☐ 15%

20. Have you heard of the following sources of money for education beyond high school?

	Yes	*No*
Federal Pell grants	☐ 71%	☐ 29%
Federal student loans	☐ 88%	☐ 12%
Federal work-study	☐ 60%	☐ 40%
State scholarships	☐ 78%	☐ 22%
Institutional scholarships	☐ 61%	☐ 39%
Private or academic scholarships	☐ 71%	☐ 29%
Athletic scholarships	☐ 84%	☐ 16%

21. Do you think your child is likely to qualify for enough of the above sources of financial assistance to attend college?

Yes	*No*	*Don't Know*
☐ 38%	☐ 7%	☐ 55%

Background

22. What is your gender?

Male	*Female*
☐ 0%	☐ 100%

23. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

Less than High School	*High School*	*Certificate*	*Associates*	*Bachelors*	*Graduate*
☐ 7%	☐ 53%	☐ 15%	☐ 10%	☐ 7%	☐ 8%

24. Are there any other adults in your household?

Yes	*No*
☐ 86%	☐ 14%

25. Is anyone in your household currently attending college?

Yes	*No*
☐ 13%	☐ 87%

26. How do you describe yourself?

- ☐ 2% American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ 0% Asian
- ☐ 1% Black or African American
- ☐ 0% Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pac. Islander
- ☐ 96% White
- ☐ 1% Other Top Response: Bi-racial

27. Which of the following free workshops would you attend if they were offered at a convenient time, with free transportation?

	Yes	*No*
Understanding Computers and the Internet	☐ 70%	☐ 30%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Basic Math	☐ 45%	☐ 55%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Basic English	☐ 36%	☐ 64%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Spelling	☐ 28%	☐ 72%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Writing	☐ 30%	☐ 70%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Speaking	☐ 27%	☐ 73%
Preparing for College - A Parent's Course	☐ 56%	☐ 44%
Understanding College Requirements	☐ 64%	☐ 36%
Understanding Financial Aid and Scholarships	☐ 74%	☐ 26%
Preparing to Take the GED	☐ 19%	☐ 81%
Understanding the Teenage Years	☐ 62%	☐ 38%
How to Help Kids Study	☐ 65%	☐ 35%
How to Know the Signs of a Troubled Teen	☐ 66%	☐ 34%

28. Do you have a computer at home?

Yes	*No*
☐ 68%	☐ 32%

PLEASE STOP HERE. DO NOT COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION.

GEAR UP Participation

29. Does your child regularly attend GEAR UP activities? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

30. Do you feel these activities are helping your child prepare to go to college after high school? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Don't Know* ☐ *Not Going to College* ☐

31. Have you attended any events provided or sponsored by the GEAR UP project? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

If "Yes," which of the following activities did you attend?

	Attended	*Did not Attend*	*Not Offered*
Workshop on types of financial aid available	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on filling out federal aid forms (FAFSA)	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on preparing your child for college	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on career opportunities	☐	☐	☐
Some other workshop	☐	☐	☐
College visit	☐	☐	☐
Cultural event	☐	☐	☐
Some other type of activity	☐	☐	☐
Some other GEAR UP family activity	☐	☐	☐
Other (what?) _____	☐	☐	☐

32. In general, do you feel that the activities you attended were helpful to you? — *Not Helpful* ☐ *Somewhat Helpful* ☐ *Very Helpful* ☐

33. Do you think your child needs additional help in preparing for college? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

If "Yes," what? _____

34. As part of your child's participation in the program, has he or she received a 21st Century Scholar Certificate? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐
(This certificate indicates how much financial assistance your child may be eligible to receive from the federal government for college.)

If "Yes," has receiving the certificate changed your plans for your child about going to college? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

35. During this school year, how frequently have you spoken with GEAR UP staff about your child? — *Never* ☐ *Once/ Twice* ☐ *Few Times* ☐ *Occa-sionally* ☐ *Fre-quently* ☐

36. In general, how satisfied are you with the GEAR UP project? — *Very Dissat.* ☐ *Dissat-isfied* ☐ *Satis-fied* ☐ *Very Satisfied* ☐

REGION: JANUARY 2001

Fairmont State College: GEAR UP Partnership Grant
2000-2001 Parent Survey

FATHERS

Identification Code: 7/18/2000

Includes 9 counties with a total of 1,667 respondents

Note: Percentages are based on the number of respondents for each item.

Instructions: This survey is intended for the parents or guardians of the 7th grade student. It is very important to gather as much information as possible; therefore we need **both** parents or guardians to complete a copy of the survey if possible. If this is a single-parent household, please disregard the second copy. Thanks for your participation!

Please place a checkmark (✓) or write in your answer, as appropriate.

General Information

1. What is your relationship to the seventh-grade child who brought this survey home?
   - ☐ 98% Father or male guardian
   - ☐ 0% Mother or female guardian
   - ☐ 2% Other Top Responses: Stepfather, Grandfather

Your Child

2. For each of the following subjects, about how much time each day does your child spend on homework?

	None	*1*	*2*	*3 or More*	*Not Taking*	*Don't Know*
English	☐12%	☐60%	☐6%	☐2%	☐1%	☐19%
Science	☐14%	☐57%	☐7%	☐2%	☐2%	☐19%
Math	☐7%	☐61%	☐11%	☐4%	☐1%	☐16%
History/Social Studies	☐12%	☐60%	☐7%	☐2%	☐1%	☐19%
All other subjects	☐13%	☐54%	☐6%	☐2%	☐0%	☐24%

3. For each of the following subjects, about how often each week do you help your child with homework?

	Never	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*	*Every Day*	*Not Taking*
English	☐26%	☐52%	☐14%	☐8%	☐1%
Science	☐21%	☐55%	☐15%	☐8%	☐2%
Math	☐17%	☐51%	☐20%	☐11%	☐1%
History/Social Studies	☐22%	☐54%	☐15%	☐8%	☐1%
All other subjects	☐23%	☐56%	☐12%	☐8%	☐1%

4. Compared with other students, how hard do you think your child works in school?

Much less Hard	*Not as Hard*	*Harder*	*Much Harder*
☐3%	☐28%	☐59%	☐10%

5. What type of student do you consider your child to be? Think about your child's academic performance and his or her study habits.

Poor	*Fair*	*Good*	*Excellent*
☐2%	☐19%	☐50%	☐29%

6. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses or grades your child needs in order to graduate from high school?

Yes	*No*
☐17%	☐83%

7. Do you feel you have enough information about the graduation requirements for high school?

Yes	*No*
☐39%	☐61%

8. How often do you attend activities or events at your child's school?

Never	*Seldom*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*
☐13%	☐21%	☐42%	☐24%

Continue

9. How often do you meet with your child's teachers to discuss the academic progress of your child?

Never	*Once*	*Few Times*	*Occa-sionally*	*Fre-quently*
☐38%	☐10%	☐25%	☐22%	☐ 5%

10. How satisfied are you with the education your child is currently receiving?

Very Dissat.	*Dissat-isfied*	*Satis-fied*	*Very Satisfied*
☐ 2%	☐11%	☐76%	☐11%

Your Child's Future Plans

11. Who provides your child with information about options for continuing his or her education after high school?

	Yes	*No*
Myself	☐ 91%	☐ 9%
Other adults at home	☐ 89%	☐ 11%
Siblings	☐ 46%	☐ 54%
Teacher(s) at school	☐ 77%	☐ 23%
Coach at school	☐ 28%	☐ 72%
Other school staff	☐ 50%	☐ 50%
Child's friends	☐ 40%	☐ 60%
GEAR UP tutor	☐ 16%	☐ 84%
GEAR UP mentor	☐ 15%	☐ 85%
Other GEAR UP staff	☐ 17%	☐ 83%
Someone else Top Responses: Grandparent, Aunt/Uncle/ Cousin, Other family member	☐ 26%	☐ 74%

12. How far in school would you like to see your child go?

Less than High School	*High School*	*Certi-ficate*	*Asso-ciates*	*Bach-elors*	*Grad-uate*
☐ 0%	☐ 8%	☐ 4%	☐ 4%	☐ 19%	☐ 65%

13. If your child does not continue his/her education after high school, what would be the main reason? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐43% It costs too much or cannot afford it
- ☐ 1% College is too far from home
- ☐ 4% H/she needs or wants to work
- ☐ 5% His/her grades are not good enough
- ☐ 4% It is not necessary for what he/she wants to do
- ☐23% He/she is not interested
- ☐ 4% He/she wants to join the military
- ☐15% Some other reason

Knowledge About College

14. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses and grades he/she needs to get into college?

Yes	*No*
☐10%	☐90%

15. Are you familiar with the entrance requirements for the three basic types of postsecondary schools?

	Yes	*No*
Two-year college	☐30%	☐70%
Four-year college or university	☐34%	☐66%
Vocational, trade, or business school	☐31%	☐69%

16. Have you talked with your child about attending college?

Yes	*No*
☐81%	☐19%

17. How much do you think it costs to attend a four-year public college in your state for one year?

$ 10,000 average

18. Have you started saving any money for your child's college education?

Yes	*No*
☐38%	☐62%

Continue

19. Do you think your child would be able to afford to attend a public four-year college or university after high school?

Definitely Not	*Doubt It*	*Not Sure*	*Probably*	*Definitely*
☐ 6%	☐ 14%	☐ 34%	☐ 30%	☐ 16%

20. Have you heard of the following sources of money for education beyond high school?

	Yes	*No*
Federal Pell grants	☐ 66%	☐ 34%
Federal student loans	☐ 84%	☐ 16%
Federal work-study	☐ 55%	☐ 45%
State scholarships	☐ 75%	☐ 25%
Institutional scholarships	☐ 60%	☐ 40%
Private or academic scholarships	☐ 70%	☐ 30%
Athletic scholarships	☐ 82%	☐ 18%

21. Do you think your child is likely to qualify for enough of the above sources of financial assistance to attend college?

Yes	*No*	*Don't Know*
☐ 36%	☐ 7%	☐ 56%

Background

22. What is your gender?

Male	*Female*
☐ 100%	☐ 0%

23. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

Less than High School	*High School*	*Certificate*	*Associates*	*Bachelors*	*Graduate*
☐ 11%	☐ 58%	☐ 9%	☐ 7%	☐ 6%	☐ 8%

24. Are there any other adults in your household?

Yes	*No*
☐ 94%	☐ 6%

25. Is anyone in your household currently attending college?

Yes	*No*
☐ 14%	☐ 86%

26. How do you describe yourself?

- ☐ 2% American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ 0% Asian
- ☐ 1% Black or African American
- ☐ 0% Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pac. Islander
- ☐ 96% White
- ☐ 1% Other Top Response: Bi-racial

27. Which of the following free workshops would you attend if they were offered at a convenient time, with free transportation?

	Yes	*No*
Understanding Computers and the Internet	☐ 54%	☐ 46%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Basic Math	☐ 32%	☐ 68%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Basic English	☐ 25%	☐ 75%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Spelling	☐ 24%	☐ 76%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Writing	☐ 22%	☐ 78%
A Brush-Up Course for Parents in Speaking	☐ 22%	☐ 78%
Preparing for College - A Parent's Course	☐ 38%	☐ 62%
Understanding College Requirements	☐ 44%	☐ 56%
Understanding Financial Aid and Scholarships	☐ 56%	☐ 44%
Preparing to Take the GED	☐ 17%	☐ 83%
Understanding the Teenage Years	☐ 41%	☐ 59%
How to Help Kids Study	☐ 49%	☐ 51%
How to Know the Signs of a Troubled Teen	☐ 50%	☐ 50%

28. Do you have a computer at home?

Yes	*No*
☐ 70%	☐ 30%

PLEASE STOP HERE. DO NOT COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION.

GEAR UP Participation

29. Does your child regularly attend GEAR UP activities? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

30. Do you feel these activities are helping your child prepare to go to college after high school? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐ *Don't Know* ☐ *Not Going to College* ☐

31. Have you attended any events provided or sponsored by the GEAR UP project? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

If "Yes," which of the following activities did you attend?

	Attended	*Did not Attend*	*Not Offered*
Workshop on types of financial aid available	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on filling out federal aid forms (FAFSA)	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on preparing your child for college	☐	☐	☐
Workshop on career opportunities	☐	☐	☐
Some other workshop	☐	☐	☐
College visit	☐	☐	☐
Cultural event	☐	☐	☐
Some other type of activity	☐	☐	☐
Some other GEAR UP family activity	☐	☐	☐
Other (what?) _____	☐	☐	☐

32. In general, do you feel that the activities you attended were helpful to you? — *Not Helpful* ☐ *Somewhat Helpful* ☐ *Very Helpful* ☐

33. Do you think your child needs additional help in preparing for college? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

If "Yes," what? _____

34. As part of your child's participation in the program, has he or she received a 21st Century Scholar Certificate? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐
(This certificate indicates how much financial assistance your child may be eligible to receive from the federal government for college.)

If "Yes," has receiving the certificate changed your plans for your child about going to college? — *Yes* ☐ *No* ☐

35. During this school year, how frequently have you spoken with GEAR UP staff about your child? — *Never* ☐ *Once/ Twice* ☐ *Few Times* ☐ *Occa- sionally* ☐ *Fre- quently* ☐

36. In general, how satisfied are you with the GEAR UP project? — *Very Dissat.* ☐ *Dissat- isfied* ☐ *Satis- fied* ☐ *Very Satisfied* ☐